













CHITTA RANJAN DAS

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# LIFE & TIMES OF C. R. DAS

THE STORY OF BENGAL'S SELF-EXPRESSION

Being a Personal Memoir  
of the late *DESHBANDHU CHITTA RANJAN*  
and a complete outline of the History of  
Bengal for the first quarter of the  
Twentieth Century

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TO  
MY SECOND DAUGHTER  
LINA

But for whose untiring patience and  
invaluable assistance these pages  
would never have seen the light of day.

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## PREFACE

CHITTA RANJAN DAS was perhaps the greatest Bengali in the first quarter of the twentieth century, and the founder and builder of the best organized school of political thought in India. In 1922, some of his grateful countrymen bestowed on him the title of "Deshbandhu" (Friend of his Country), and from that day he was throughout India better known by this title than by his name. The record of his career, with that of the evolution of the political thought of the country in his day, is bound to fill many pages in the annals of Modern India.

During the lifetime of Deshbandhu Chitta Ranjan Das, Bengal had covered the track of centuries, and, casting off the traditions and languor of the feudal and the Middle Ages, pushed herself forward as one of the most advanced and progressive provinces of Asia. Under the influences of a series of most wonderful changes, the *bhadralog*, or middle classes of Bengal have begun to think of life and politics in terms of Western culture and modern democracy. The masses have thrown off the shackles which centuries of social tyranny had laid upon them, and are beginning to feel the pulsation of a new and free life. The untouchable classes no longer feel life a curse and a burden, and find no occupation or avenue shut to them; and the women of Bengal enjoy and exercise to-day almost all the rights that belong to the daughters of the most advanced countries of Europe. They have torn the *purdah* to pieces, are admitted freely to the universities, are not barred from succession to real property, preside over national congresses and conferences, and share the responsibilities of administration by going to the polls.

In the republic of letters and science, Bengal has now gained a position of great distinction; in the arts also, her



recent contributions have brought her the admiration of both the East and the West. Her industrial activities have also brought her prominently into line with modern European nations.

About the end of the nineteenth century Bengal lay helpless at the feet of her conqueror, and all the topmost places of the various learned professions were occupied by men of the ruling race. The Bar and the professions of medicine and engineering were all led by Englishmen; even the chief educationalists of the day were Europeans. Now, as I am writing this book, there are Indians at the head of the profession of law, medicine and engineering; and even in education, young Bengali students would rather sit at the feet of their own countrymen for inspiration and knowledge than seek them of teachers who come from the west of Suez. Following closely on Indian success in the various professions, the administration of the premier city of India and of the biggest University of Asia has now also passed into Indian hands.

The history of these various changes makes a brilliant chapter of progress in Eastern life, and it is confidently expected will interest everywhere.

In writing this Memoir I have extenuated nothing, nor set down aught in malice. Though I have myself taken some part in the active politics of contemporary India, I have tried to make the study as impartial and dispassionate as possible.

I have to thank Mr. Sukumar Dutt of the Dacca University for assisting me in writing the chapter on the literary career of Chitta Ranjan, and Lt.-Col. A. G. Hamilton, of the Salvation Army, London, and my youngest daughter, Bina, for having helped me with many valuable suggestions.

P. C. RAY.

## CHRONOLOGY OF C. R. DAS'S LIFE

1870	November 5th	Born in Calcutta, in a house in Pataldanga Street. Educated at the L.M.S. Institution, Bhowanipur and the Presidency College, Calcutta.
1890	..	Graduated from the Presidency College and proceeded to England the same year.
1891	..	Sat for the Indian Civil Service and failed.
1892	..	Was called to the Bar from the Middle Temple.
1893	..	Returned to India, and enrolled as a Barrister in the Calcutta High Court.
1895	..	<i>Malancha</i> published.
1897	December 3rd	Married the daughter of Mr. Barada N. Halder.
1906	June 19th December	Went through the Insolvency Court. Joined the Congress for the first time as a Delegate.
1907-8	..	The Khururia Zemindari case. Trial of Brahmabandhab Upodhaya. Trial of Bipin Ch. Pal.
1908	..	The defence of Aurobindo Ghose and other Manicktolla Bomb Conspirators.
1911	..	Defended the accused in the Dacca Conspiracy Case.
1913	May 14th	Became a discharged insolvent by paying all his and his father's debts. Published the <i>Sagar Sanjit (The Song of the Sea)</i> .
1914	July	Chitta Ranjan's father died at Purulia. Accepted the Dumraon brief on behalf of Keso Prosad Singh, a remote reversioner of the "gadi".
1917	..	President of the Bengal Provincial Conference, Bhowanipur.

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- 1918 .. Speech at the Town Hall meeting condemning the Defence of India Act.
- 1919 .. Member of the Non-Official Jallianwalla Bagh Enquiry Committee.  
First advocacy of obstruction in the Amritsar Congress.  
At a meeting in the Calcutta Maidan, supported Mahatma Gandhi's Passive Resistance Movement (Satyagraha) as a protest against the Rowlatt Act.
- 1920 March Mahatma Gandhi declared Non-co-operation with Government and the Europeans.
- September 4th Opposed the Non-co-operation programme of Mahatma Gandhi in the Special Congress at Calcutta, held under the presidency of Lala Lajpat Rai.
- December Accepted the Non-co-operation programme in the Congress at Nagpur, held under the presidency of Mr. Vijayaraghava Chariar.
- 1921 January Suspended practice at the Bar.  
Political tour in Eastern Bengal and Assam.  
Establishment of a "National University" at Dacca. Ordered to refrain from entering Mymensingh by the District Magistrate. Revocation of the prohibition order. Visit to Mymensingh and Tangail. Visit to Habiganj, Maulvi Bazar, Sylhet, Comilla, Chittagong, etc.  
Attended the Barisal Conference as a delegate.
- November 25th Volunteer Corps declared an illegal association.  
The ban on public meetings.  
Lord Reading on arriving in Calcutta, approved of the repressive measures taken by the Bengal Government.
- November 27th The Congress Committee decided to disobey the order of the Government regarding the Volunteer Corps and public meetings.
- November 28th The Khilafat Committee accepted the above decision of the Congress Committee.

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- C. R. Das recognized as Dictator by the Congress and Khilafat organisations in Bengal.
- As Dictator C. R. Das issued several manifestoes, and called for 10 lakhs of volunteers.
- The Government declared these manifestoes as well as the call for volunteers illegal.
- November 30th    At the St. Andrew's Dinner in Calcutta Lord Ronaldshay, then Governor of Bengal, referred to Das in most eulogistic terms, at the same time holding out a threat.
- December 6th    A number of volunteers, including C. R. Das's son, were sent to Burrabazar and were arrested.
- December 7th    Along with other volunteers, C. R. Das's wife, sister and other ladies were arrested, but immediately released.
- December 10th   C. R. Das arrested under Sec. 17 B. Criminal Law Amendment Act.
- December 25th   C. R. Das, President-elect of the Congress, could not preside over its annual session held at Ahmedabad as he was then an under-trial prisoner. Hakim Ajmal Kham of Delhi took his place.
- Visit of the Prince of Wales to Calcutta and "hartal" (strike) observed on the day of his arrival.
- 1922              Congress Civil Disobedience Committee reported that the time was not ripe.
- January 6th      C. R. Das sentenced to six months' imprisonment.
- Reading-Malaviya negotiations for a Round Table Conference. C. R. Das's consent to Malaviya's proposal subject to Mahatma Gandhi's approval.
- July              Address presented to Das, on his release, at Mirzapur Park.
- December        Presided over the Congress at Gaya and founded the Swaraj Party.

- 1923 September Founded *Forward*.  
Council entry resolution accepted in the special session of the Congress at Delhi.
- December Council entry resolution adopted by the Cocanada Congress held under the presidency of Maulana Mohamed Ali.  
Entry of the Swarajists into the Council.  
Defeats of prominent Liberals like Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea and Mr. S. R. Das. Swarajists return in the general election as the strongest single party in the Bengal Council.  
C. R. Das invited by Lord Lytton to form a ministry; his refusal.  
Coalition with Independents.  
Hindu-Moslem Pact causing serious dissatisfaction among various sections of the community.  
Presided over the All India Trade Union Congress at Lahore.
- 1924 January Declined to accept Lord Lytton's offer of Ministry.  
Capture of the Calcutta Corporation by the Swarajists. C. R. Das elected the first Mayor of Calcutta.
- March 24th At a meeting of the Bengal Legislative Council a motion was put to the effect that the demand for Rs. 2,20,000/- under the head 22 E (Bengal Budget for 1925-26 for Ministers' salaries) be refused. Sixty-three members supported the motion; sixty-two opposed.
- April Serajunge Conference and Gopi Nath Shah resolution.  
C. R. Das appointed a Committee on behalf of the Congress to enquire into Tarakeswar affairs.  
"Satyagraha" declared at Tarakeswar.  
C. R. Das's compromise with Satish Giri, the Mohunt of that shrine.  
Presided over the fourth Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress at Calcutta.

### **TWO NOTABLE UTTERANCES OF C. R. DAS :**

**“ If I die in this work of winning freedom, I believe I shall be born in this country again and again, live for it, hope for it, work for it with all the energy of my life, with all the love of my nature till I see the fulfilment of my hope and the realization of this idea.”**

**“ I have loved this land of mine with all my heart, from childhood ; in manhood, through all my manifold weakness, unfitness and poverty of soul. I have striven to keep alive its image in my heart ; and to-day, on the threshold of age, that image has become truer and clearer than ever.”**

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December	Attended the ordinary session of the Congress held at Belgium under the presidency of Mahatma Gandhi.
1925 March	Reading-Birkenhead-Das conversations. At a meeting of the Bengal Legislative Council, a motion was put to the effect that the demand of Rs. 1,28000/- under head 22 E (Bengal Budget for 1926-17 for Ministers' salaries for 1926-27) be refused. Sixty nine members supported the motion, sixty three opposed. Made over his property to a trust for the service of the country.
March 30th	Issued manifesto repudiating violence and revolutionary activities.
April 4th	Issued second manifesto on repression-revolutionary activities.
May 2nd	Faridpore Conference offer of honourable co-operation in his Presidential Address.
May 16th	Reached Darjeeling.
June 16th	Died at Darjeeling, at 5.15 p.m.

## CHAPTER I

### BENGAL IN THE MID-VICTORIAN ERA

It was not long after the suppression of the Sepoy Revolt that the first fruits of a century of British Rule in India, or the results of the impact of the East with the West, began to appear on the surface of Indian life. The first few Governors-General of India had devoted all their attention and energy to the work of conquest and annexation, and to widening the physical boundaries of England's new-founded Dependency in the East. Warren Hastings certainly, as the founder of the Calcutta Madrasa and of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and, after him, Lord Cornwallis and Sir John Shore, to some extent, gave their attention to domestic affairs ; but they were more concerned, like most of their successors up to the days of Lord Dalhousie, in deepening the foundation and consolidating the fabric of their Eastern Empire.

It must be remembered that up to Lord Dalhousie's time, Bengal meant a much wider geographical and administrative area than we now understand by the name. Before the Charter Act of 1853, the Bengal Presidency consisted of Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Orissa and the whole of the United Provinces, with Delhi and a part of the Punjab thrown in. By the Charter Act of 1853, a new Lieutenant-Governorship was created with Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam as an independent administrative province. The area that thus came to be known as Bengal was not quite the same province as was known by that name under the Sen Kings of Vikrampur, nor the one that came to be governed by the Nawabs of Dacca and Murshidabad in later days ; nor again was its political area known by that name after the annulment of the Partition of Bengal in 1912.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Bengal practically meant India, and it was not till the first few



years of that century had passed that India's Governors-General began to be concerned about their responsibilities to the people of this country. Early in that century, the East India Company began to develop schemes for the education of the people. The Charter Act of 1813<sup>1</sup> had set apart a lakh of rupees for the "introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences in Bengal", and this was rightly interpreted as a scheme for the encouragement of Sanskrit and Arabic. In the following year, the Court of Directors instructed the Governor-General to leave the Hindus to the practice, long established among them, of giving instruction in their homes and to encourage talent by the stimulus of honorary marks of distinction, and in some cases by grants of money. It was not, however, before 1817 that the first school was started in Calcutta under official patronage<sup>2</sup> to educate Hindu boys through the medium of English.

From the foundation of the Hindu College<sup>2</sup> in 1817, which was established with the elevated object of giving "tuition to the sons of respectable Hindus in the English and Indian languages, and in the literature and science of Europe and Asia", up to 1835, when the Medical College was founded in Calcutta, and the first Committee of Public Instruction was established in Bengal, most of the Governors-General of India helped in organizing several schools in and around Calcutta.

Besides the efforts of the East India Company, some of the European Missionary Societies began to divert their work in Bengal from preaching the gospel to teaching the rudiments of a liberal education. In 1816, the noble trinity of Baptist Missionaries—Carey, Marshman and Ward—founded a

<sup>1</sup> Before the establishment of the Hindu College there were several schools run by private enterprise in Sutanati, Govindapur and Kalighat, the three small villages out of which has developed the modern city of Calcutta. There were Archer's School (1780), Mackinnon's School (1789), Brown's Boarding School for young Hindus (1780), Linstedt's and Farrel's Seminaries, Huttman's School in Boitkkhana, David Drummond's School in Dhurumtolla (where Derozio, the Eurasian poet, was educated) and schools conducted by Sherbourne, Martin Bowles, and Arathoon Petras.

<sup>2</sup> The Hindu College was developed out of a local "Vidyalaya" established in 1816, and first started its work on 20th January, 1817, in the premises of Gora Chand Basak at Garanahata.

collage at Serampur—then one of the most populous towns on the right bank of the Ganges, about fifteen miles away from Calcutta—and gave a great stimulus to educational and intellectual activities. In 1830, Dr. Duff, a Scottish missionary, founded the Free Church Institution at Nimtolla, subsequently amalgamated with the General Assembly's Institution at Cornwallis Square, which has educated nearly five generations of Bengali youth.

These were the beginnings of a process of civilizing India according to Western standards of life and the results of these efforts were not visible till the boys educated in these schools and colleges had grown to manhood. Men like Michael Madhushudan Dutt, Harish Chandra Mukerjee, Girish Chandra Ghose, Ram Gopal Ghose, Raj Narayan Bose and K. M. Banerjea, were the results of the earliest efforts of English officials and missionaries to educate India according to Western ideals, and their pioneer work in these directions brought in a new phase of Bengali national life. There could be no doubt after these first-fruits had been gathered, that the English language had infused new life into a decaying society.

With the educational awakening of Bengal came a striking change in the spirit of an ancient and isolated people. Again, it was in the early nineteenth century that the English Governors-General of India began to pay attention to the social structure of Indian life. The institutions of *thagi* and infanticide, as well as the pernicious system of burning widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands, were put down by the strong hand of John Company before Victoria had come to the throne. In this matter, however, it was not Englishmen only who tried to lead India along a new path. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, undoubtedly the greatest Bengali of his age, who combined the courage and idealism of Martin Luther and John Calvin, had not only helped to organize a new educational movement in Bengal, but had also helped Lord William Bentinck and Sir Charles Metcalfe to tide over serious Indian opposition against all their attempts at reform. With a select number of friends, the Raja made a brave

attempt to root out the principal evils of Hindu society that had been allowed for centuries to degrade Indian manhood.

It is curious to note that Raja Ram Mohan Roy's reforming zeal hardly made any impression on orthodox Hindu society until many generations of Indians had been successfully imbued with his principles and philosophy. For the better part of the nineteenth century, early marriage and polygamy flourished. Boys were given in marriage generally between the ages of fifteen and eighteen, and girls between six and ten. Thousands of girls became widows before they had once seen their husbands or come to the age of four. A man having more than half a dozen wives was often considered a person of great social rank and position, and a Brahmin having more than a hundred wives as a person of high sacerdotal dignity, merely on that account. Long after Raja Ram Mohan Roy had died, Pundit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, himself a Brahmin of the highest rank and a great Pundit, carried on a crusade against both infant marriage and polygamy, and it was about this time that educated Bengalis definitely turned against these evils, though even to-day early marriage and polygamy cannot be said to be entirely extinct.

The purdah, which had come into vogue in Bengal, and for the matter of that all over northern India, as a consequence of the Mahomedan conquest, remained an outstanding feature of our domestic life. Excepting women of the lowest classes, and those who had become converts to Christianity or Brahmoism, no daughter of Bengal dared to show her face in the light of day or come out of her inner apartments. There the woman lay condemned to a life-long prison, a helpless, prostrate and pathetic figure—with enfeebled health, her naturally keen senses dulled through inaction, without the light of knowledge illumining her vision, steeped in ignorance and prejudice, groping in the dark—a martyr to the conventions of the society in which she had been born.

The complexities of the caste system not only gave daily trouble to the head of the house, but its laws and injunctions dominated the entire social atmosphere to such an extent

that no marriage could be celebrated, no birth announced, no funeral rite performed without the technical advice of the learned Pundits and in conformity with the special caste rules of every class of the people. The laws of caste even penetrated into the kitchen, for no orthodox Hindu could eat certain kinds of potatoes, pumpkins and bananas, as everything brought from foreign countries was religiously avoided. No one could eat a particular fruit on a certain day of the week or in a certain month. Yet, strange to say, every Bengali, including Brahmins, could eat fish and meat, denied to the higher castes of other provinces. Intercaste dining could hardly be imagined in those days.

Railway travelling was indirectly discouraged in so far as no one could eat or drink in the company of a promiscuous crowd composed of different castes. On top of all this there were minute injunctions as to when people could leave home to visit any place outside their native village, and no one could step out of his home on a Thursday or Saturday afternoon or on some particular day of the moon—the Hindus calculating their calendar by the moon.

The cultivated intelligence of Raja Ram Mohan Roy revolted against this low condition of Hindu spiritual and social life. Hinduism since the Middle Ages had degenerated into the worst form of idolatry and meaningless mummeries and 'dogmas.' Among the thirty-three crores of gods and goddesses in the Hindu pantheon were included such strange deities as the round stone called the salgram, the snake, the banyan and peepul trees, the tulsi plant, and the goddesses that control cholera (Ola), small-pox (Sitala) and skin diseases (Ghetu). One recalls with some amusement that when in the famous impeachment of Warren Hastings, his Counsel referred to his having found a niche in the Hindu pantheon, the great Edmund Burke answered that the Hindus dreaded the powers of evil and they included in their pantheon every spirit that might cause them trouble and mischief and sorrow.

However droll his religious and social ideas, the average Bengali of those days was not half so bad or vile as were his

gods and fetishes. The Bengali of the mid-Victorian era, though lacking the higher concepts of an immanent and all pervading divinity, lived a spiritual life, paying to whatever gods he had learned to worship, through tradition and custom, a sincere devotion of soul and heart. He regulated all his life by the fear of his gods, and as a result lived a happy and peaceful life. Generally his honesty, truthfulness, simplicity, sincerity, and integrity of purpose were all inspired by this love and fear of his gods.

In addition, there was in full force in those days the influence of the joint family system, which acted as a sort of national insurance and provided a means of livelihood for every person, no matter whether old, infirm, blind, incapable or incurable. The unity of society was not the individual, but the family, and every man's and woman's position was assured and regulated by ties of blood and marriage.<sup>1</sup>

But from a too close contact with British laws and institutions, and under the influence of the evils of a materialistic civilization, the atmosphere of the happy Bengali home soon changed for the worse. Yet Macaulay's notorious description of the Bengali people was a malevolent libel, and if at all correct, could apply only to that handful

<sup>1</sup> It may not be generally known outside India that the joint family system is an essential part of the wider caste organization of the Hindus. Caste and the joint family may have their very dark sides and the influence of both is retreating before newer ideas. Yet at one time people were deeply impressed with the brighter side of Hindu caste organization. A penetrating observer like Sidney Low has the following in his *Vision of India* :—

“ There is no doubt that it is the main cause of the fundamental stability and contentment by which Indian society has braced for centuries against the shocks of politics and the cataclysms of Nature. It provides every man with his place, his career, his occupation, his circle of friends. It makes him at the outset a member of a corporate body. It protects him through life from the canker of social jealousy and unfulfilled aspirations. It ensures him companionship and a sense of community with others in like case with himself. The caste organization is to the Hindu his club, his trade union, his benefit society, his philanthropic society. There are no work houses in India and none are as yet needed. The obligation to provide for kinsfolk and friends in distress is universally acknowledged ; nor can it be questioned that this is due to the recognition of the strength of family ties, and of the bond created by association, common pursuits, which is fostered by the caste principle.”

of miserable creatures who hovered round the Courts of Murshidabad and of John Company, and depended on dishonesty, deceit, and cunning to earn their bread and butter.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy wanted to do away with all the idolatry and other evils of Hindu society, and to establish the worship of the true, the indivisible, the omniscient and the omnipotent Creator of the Universe, and socially, to bring back to India the reign of reason and peace and goodwill.

After a long and arduous struggle Raja Ram Mohan Roy found it impossible to retain his connection with orthodox Hindu society, and was compelled to establish a new church in 1830, since known as the Brahmo Samaj, for the purification of religious and moral ideas, and for the propagation of a new faith based on the lofty idealism of the Upanishads.

The seeds sown by him did not, however, germinate till the mid-Victorian era, and only began to bear fruit when a very large number of people belonging to the middle classes had been educated in the schools founded by the English. About this time, Maharsi Devendra Nath Tagore, father of Rabindra Nath Tagore, and Keshab Chandra Sen, perhaps the greatest of Indian orators, became the principal exponents of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's new doctrine of unqualified theism.

After Raja Ram Mohan Roy had started his social reform campaign and founded the Brahmo Samaj, he and his English friends were confronted with a new reactionary wave which put the educational programme of the East India Company to a sharp test. Leading citizens of Calcutta now began to be nervous over the fact that English education was disintegrating their society and making a mockery of their social institutions. They, therefore, raised a campaign for the rehabilitation of the vernacular as a medium of instruction in the public schools and colleges of Bengal. The pressure of this conservative element of society became so insistent that the East India Company was compelled to put its educational policy on a sure and definite basis. Hitherto, unfortunately, the educational programme of the East India

Company had been a haphazard one, lacking all the elements of stability and progress, though a Committee of Public Instruction had been established in 1823 to regulate and look after the course of education in Bengal.

Happily for Bengal, and ultimately for the whole of India, Lord Macaulay, the first Law Member of the Government, threw in all the weight of his authority with Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and was determined to keep at arm's length the older ideals and vehicles of public instruction. Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Lord Macaulay believed that the future of India lay with English education, and neither would have any vernaculars re-established as a medium of public instruction; they would have nothing but English for the purpose. In a petition to Lord Amherst, Raja Ram Mohan Roy had urged, "If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British legislatures."

A bitter controversy continued for some time between the Orientalists and Anglicists, as they were styled in later history, until the Governor-General of the period, Lord William Bentinck, supported the cause of the Anglicists and directed that all the money held at the disposal of the Company for the diffusion of education should be spent in "imparting instruction in European languages and sciences through the medium of English". Nearly twenty years later, the great despatch of Sir Charles Wood, the grandfather of the present Viceroy of India, and the last President of the Board of Control of the Company, settled this great controversy for good. Sir Charles Wood's despatch enunciated the broad principles of the future educational policy of the East India Company, and recommended the establishment of a University in each Presidency town of India to give effect to his scheme of advancement of learning in this country

through the medium of English. The first batch of graduates of the new University of Calcutta did not make their appearance till the mid-Victorian era.~

The policy of educating our people in English and on the basis of a Western culture did not tend entirely to our good. In many cases, the effects of pouring new wine into the old bottles of Hindu society were disastrous. Lord Ronaldshay has summed up the position of the English educated people of Bengal of those days very faithfully in the following passage :

“ By the middle of the nineteenth century a period of intellectual anarchy had set in, which swept the rising generation before it like a craft which has snapped its moorings. Westernism became the fashion of the day—and Westernism demanded of its votaries that they should cry down the civilization of their own country. The more ardent their admiration for everything Western, the more vehement became their denunciation of everything Eastern. The ancient learning was despised ; ancient custom and tradition were thrust aside ; ancient religion was decried as an outworn superstition. The ancient foundations upon which the complex structure of Hindu society had been built up were undermined ; and the new generation of iconoclasts found little enough with which to underpin the edifice which they were so recklessly depriving of its own foundations.”

The new educational and intellectual activities of Bengal gave a fillip to the development of the Bengali language and literature. Only a few years previously, it had been the fashion to look down upon Bengali as a local patois of the vulgar and uneducated masses. With the spread of English education the better minds of the province were directed towards their own vernacular, and before long the Bengali language had flowered as one of the most expressive vehicles of thought in the world. Men like Ishwar Chandra Gupta, Akshay Kumar Dutt, Dina Bandhu Mitra, Teck Chand and Bankim Chandra Chatterji brought a new and broad sweep of vision into the life of their people.



They dwelt in their works on highly sensitive doctrines, such as liberty, equality and freedom, broadened our ideas of citizenship, and spoke in a new way about the real relationship of the sexes. Their doctrines and ideas pulverized the conservative orthodoxy which had held sway in Bengal since the days of Raghunandan of Navadvip.<sup>1</sup> From this time forward Bengali thought put on raiment of its own, and drew the attention of intellectual people all over the world.

Economically and industrially, Bengal, like all other parts of the country, was lying helpless and prostrate at the mercy of her rulers and foreign exploiters. The Bengali mind had not yet developed any economic or industrial conscience, and manual labour of all sorts, including the occupation of trade and commerce, was generally tabooed by all bhadralog classes. And the spirit of hoarding of precious metals had taken such a possession of the Bengali mind through centuries of insecurity that no capital could be attracted to any industrial enterprise.

Though economically depressed, the beginnings of a new era of industrialism and prosperity in Bengal were at hand. The establishment of a jute mill at Rishra in 1855, and the foundation of the cotton industry in Bombay in 1856, had set educated men thinking about India's industrial and economic potentialities. The first sod of a railway was turned in Bengal in Lord Dalhousie's reign, and the East India Company first laid a railway line between Ranigunge and Calcutta only a few years before the Sepoy Revolt. This was the beginning of the network of railways which soon made famines less frequent, and the transport of foodstuffs and raw materials easier.

The enormous extension of the Post Offices and telegraph wires quickened communications, and helped in developing both internal and external trade. But those were days when the foreigner generally exploited the resources of the

<sup>1</sup> Raghunandan was a great Pundit and Lawgiver of the sixteenth century, whose *Smriti* remained, till about the end of the last century, the principal code of laws for the regulation of the personal, domestic, and social life of the Hindus of Bengal.

country, both in labour and in raw materials, and the indolent Indian gazed at the situation in blank astonishment and despair. Up to this time agriculture had been practically the only industry. Not till the passing of the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1859, and its first amendment in 1885, were the Bengal peasantry anything better than mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. They were very much like the Irish cottiers and the Egyptian fallahin, practically serfs having no right in the land they cultivated and the holdings on which they lived. On top of this, they were more often than not rack-rented, and made to pay special contributions (*abwabs*) on the marriages and *sradhhs* of their landlord's sons, daughters and relatives, whether they had a crop or not. When in a lean year they were unable to pay their rents they were brought in batches to the zemindar's kutchery (office) and were subjected to physical torture. The life of the Bengal peasant was surrounded by a dark cloud and he had no incentive to make any improvements on his land or even to live the natural span of his life.<sup>1</sup> Though the zemindars of this time were mostly bad, there were at least a few who spent money in digging tanks to supply drinking water to their tenantry, opening dispensaries for the free distribution of medicines, and in some cases founding small schools and *maktabs*. Unlike the Bengal zemindars of the present day, they were not insolvent, and used to spend large sums of money on ceremonial occasions, the benefits of which were shared in some measure by their tenants.

But it was not till the transfer of the Government of this country from the hands of the East India Company to the Crown that India entered on a definite stage of political evolution. The dark intrigues behind the earlier conquests of Indian territories, the development of the policy of lapse and annexation, the statutory superiority of European residents in India, the ruthless suppression of the Sepoy Revolt, and the indiscriminate retaliation carried on by Anglo-Indians all over the country to quench the dying

<sup>1</sup> See Lal Behary De's *Bengal Peasant Life* (originally published under the name of *Govinda Samantia*).

embers of the fire raised by the last Peshwa and his lieutenants, had begun to create a general feeling of dissatisfaction.

The earlier notion of a paternal Government making for peace, plenty and prosperity, was giving place to a new sense of suspicion and misgiving, and the placid acquiescence of the people in everything done by the British in India began to be challenged and shaken. Indians were for the first time beginning to realize that it was not in the spirit of trusteeship that India was being governed as a part of the British Empire. If anything was still needed for them to realize their actual situation, the condition of the indigo cultivators of the period so well described in Dina Bandhu Mitra's *Nil Darpan*, the conduct and trial of the indigo-planters in Nadia and Rajshahi immediately after the Mutiny, the Torture Commission of 1853, and the placing of the Black Act upon the Statute Book during Lord Canning's Viceroyalty removed the scales from their eyes, and brought them face to face with the dark realities of an alien rule. Indians felt at every step that the white people were their "masters", who under the velvet glove had a mailed fist, and whose friendship for the people of India was only lip-deep.

Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858, though not conceived by Lord Derby in a "pettifogging spirit", was not received by the people of India more enthusiastically than would have been the gift of a toy for their delectation and amusement. Just a quarter of a century before this, in the Charter Act of 1833, a similar pious wish had been given to the people of India as a message of hope, only to be disregarded again and again. In anticipating Lord Derby and Queen Victoria's Proclamation, the Charter Act of 1833 had said that "no native of India, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent or colour or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment under the said Company". The sickness of deferred hope and continuous disappointment was pressing on the Indian mind and promises made to the ears and broken to the heart became a very common feature of the Anglo-Indian administration. By

the mid-Victorian era, the spirit of distrust of England's professions for our welfare and prosperity had permeated a large class of our people, and when the Indian Councils Act of 1861 gave Indians the right for the first time to enter the legislative bodies dissatisfaction and distrust found expression at almost every session of the Councils.

Between the historic year 1835, when Sir Charles Metcalfe freed the Indian Press from its earlier shackles, and the time when Lord Lytton tried to muzzle the vernacular Press, a few newspapers appeared to fill the void and occupy a large place in the public life of the country. The *Hindu Patriot*, started before the Mutiny, became a terror to authority during Lord Canning's rule, under the very distinguished editorship of Harish Chandra Mukerjee. A self-made man, Harish Chandra wielded a trenchant pen and had a wonderful command of nervous and classical English. He was honest, independent, and sincere beyond measure, and when he threw his weight into any cause, that cause was bound to succeed. He was a terror to the bureaucracy as well as to the white colonists and planters in Bengal. The leaders that he wrote in the *Hindu Patriot* in those days gave a new inspiration to the educated community all over the country, and struck terror into the heart of every wrongdoer. Kristodas Pal, who succeeded him on the *Hindu Patriot* was less courageous and more tactful, and he managed to become, as well as to make his organ, the interpreter of the thoughts and feelings of both rulers and ruled. The *Indian Mirror* had won a very prominent place among the newspapers of the country under the editorship of Keshab Chandra Sen, and later of his cousin, Narendra Nath Sen. The *Bengalee*, started in 1868 by Girish Chandra Ghose, at once became a very independent exponent of public views, and before Surendra Nath Banerjea took it over ten years later, it had become a power in the land. The tiny little Bengali weekly, known as the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, started originally in a village in Jessore by Sisir Kumar Ghose and Motilal Ghose, both born journalists, and masters of a quaint archaic style, was transferred to Calcutta,

and some years later was converted into an English newspaper to avert the blow aimed against it by Lord Lytton. Between the *Hindu Patriot*, the *Mirror*, the *Bengalee* and the *Patrika*, all started and maintained as weeklies in those days, a volume of public opinion was created against all un-British methods of administration, and a new life began to stir in the dry bones.

Though the Press became so powerful, it is surprising that the Bar and the platform, the other two principal instruments of modern democracies, had not yet begun to take their legitimate part in the public life of the country.<sup>1</sup>

In such an atmosphere of strife and distrust and of racial antagonism on the one side, and of a newly developed sense of national self-consciousness and of intellectual and political activities on the other, was Chitta Ranjan Das born.

<sup>1</sup> The platform did not become a power in the land till about the end of Lord Curzon's viceroyalty, and the Bar not before the recommendations of the Indian Bar Committee were given effect to in 1925, practically equalizing the position and status of Indian legal practitioners with those of the members of the English Bar.

## CHAPTER II

### CHITTA RANJAN'S PARENTAGE AND EARLY INFLUENCES

CHITTA RANJAN DAS was born on November 5th, 1870, in a house in Pataldanga Street in Central Calcutta. Chitta Ranjan's father, Bhubon Mohan Das, was a solicitor, and had settled down in Calcutta many years before Chitta Ranjan was born. The Das family did not belong to Calcutta but hailed from a well-known Vaidya family of Telirbagh in Vikrampur.

Vikrampur, in the district of Dacca, is renowned as an ancient seat of learning, and is the centre of a growing and intelligent middle class population. After the days of Lakshman Sen and Ballal Sen in the eleventh century A.D., Vikrampur was not only for a long time the headquarters of the government of Gour (the older name of Bengal), but also the centre of the literary, social, political and intellectual interests of mediæval Bengal. Owing to the increase of the middle class population in Vikrampur, land has been parcelled out into very small holdings, with the result on the one hand, that this class of people has been obliged to seek its living elsewhere and in different occupations, and on the other, that Lord Cornwallis's "permanent settlement" has ceased to affect their temperament prejudicially. Unlike the inhabitants of Bombay, the Punjab and elsewhere, the people of Bengal have so far depended more on the land for a living than on any arts or industries; and in consequence of this dependence, there being no need for much manual or intellectual labour in its cultivation, they have inherited a lazy and unenterprising temperament. Vikrampur is almost the only place in Bengal where land, on account of its minute subinfeudation and its unparalleled density of population<sup>1</sup>, has ceased to provide

<sup>1</sup> Nearly 2,151 to a square mile.

an easy living, and the people have, therefore, been compelled to fall back upon their own resources and initiative and seek other fields of enterprise. Here as elsewhere, a spirit of enterprise and of unrest has been created by economic depression, and Chitta Ranjan inherited in a very large measure, through his ancestors, this spirit of unrest, of enterprise, which marks the people of Vikrampur in a superlative degree, and which caused a pro-consul such uneasiness that to restrict and break their influence he propounded a blundering scheme of territorial redistribution.

There is another notable event in the history of Chitta Ranjan's family which must be referred to here. One of Chitta Ranjan's grandfathers, and two of his paternal uncles, had migrated early in life to Barisal and settled there as lawyers. Barisal is well-known in Bengal for the tenacity, doggedness, determination and virility of its people. Its atmosphere and environment, owing perhaps to its peculiar geographical position and to its being minutely intersected by estuary creeks, are peculiar and quite distinct from the rest of the country. From their long residence in Barisal, the Dases had acquired all the tenacity and doggedness of the people of the district. Chitta Ranjan inherited not a little of this temperament, and he combined in his make-up these outstanding characteristics, to a remarkable extent.

Chitta Ranjan's father, a solicitor, was also a journalist. As a highly intelligent and educated member of the Brahmo Samaj, he was chosen to edit the weekly organ of the church known as the *Brahmo Public Opinion*. Slowly and steadily, Bhubon Mohan Das diverted it into a political newspaper, from being a mere weekly record of affairs of his church, and at one time he came perilously near to a prosecution for sedition. The leaders of the Brahmo Samaj took fright at the situation, and parted company with Bhubon Mohan, who, a few months later, started an organ of his own under the name of the *Bengal Public Opinion*. In this enterprise he burnt his fingers and came to grief financially, but the enthusiasm of the journalist was not only a great

inspiration to his son, but remained a guiding principle and passion of Chitta Ranjan till the end of his days.

Bhubon Mohan Das was, however, a man of a quite different temperament in domestic and social life. He was a curious mixture of strength and timidity, and became more conservative in his social ideas as he grew older. He had not that push and go and that enthusiasm of the convert which his brother, Durga Mohan Das, had. Durga Mohan Das, who commenced his practice as a lawyer in Barisal, came to Calcutta on the establishment of the High Court in 1861 and soon built up a good criminal practice. His enthusiasm for the Brahmo Samaj never flagged, even when he became a busy lawyer, and unlike Keshab Chandra Sen, his anchor always held. Such was his faith in the principles of his Church that he refused to marry his eldest daughter to the young Maharaja of Kuch Behar as she had not then come to the age which the Brahmo Samaj had laid down as the minimum for the marriage of girls. Keshab Chandra Sen, then the leader of the Brahmo Samaj, could not however resist the temptation of an alliance with a Native Prince, and though his eldest daughter was under fourteen, he broke the law of the Brahmo Samaj and gave her in marriage to the young Maharaja. It is worth noting here that Keshab Chandra Sen's departure from this canon of his Church was the chief cause of a second schism<sup>1</sup> in that Church. Durga Mohan Das, Siv Nath Sastri, Ananda Mohan Bose and other leading lights of the Brahmo Samaj seceded from Keshab Chandra Sen's party and organized a new Church under the name of "Sadharan Brahmo Samaj", Keshab Chandra being left to shepherd his flock under the name of the "New Dispensation". Of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Durga Mohan Das soon became one of the leading figures, and the principal financial patron. He took his courage in both hands in giving full effect to the new social programme not only by

<sup>1</sup> The first schism occurred when Keshab Chandra Sen and Devendra Nath Tagore fell out on the question of the preservation of Hindu orthodoxy in the social rites of the Brahmo Samaj. On this cleavage Devendra Nath Tagore's rump came to be named the "Adi (Original) Brahmo Samaj".



removing all disqualification of sex in the services of his church, but also in facing the indignation of the whole country by giving his young widowed step-mother in marriage for a second time, an affair which sent the people of Bengal into convulsions. Durga Mohan did not shrink from the social obloquy and opprobrium which assailed him on this account, while his brother Bhubon Mohan escaped the fury of his community as the younger brother, and consequently the less responsible member of the family. This offered him a safe shelter in which he found the peace and happiness of mind which suited his nature and genius.

Chitta Ranjan, as the product of the times, and as the son of Bhubon Mohan, and nephew of Durga Mohan, represented in his life the high water mark of strength and tenacity, as well as the spirit of revolt and unrest, with not a small dose of hesitancy and timidity thrown in.

Chitta Ranjan's mother, Nistarini Devi, also contributed not a little to the making of her son's character. Though belonging to the church of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, she did not share the enthusiasm of its followers or its advanced social and domestic ideas. Perhaps the conservative nature of his mother brought Chitta Ranjan back in his mature age into the fold of the orthodox church, though not exactly as an orthodox Hindu. I have it on the authority of Lady Bose<sup>1</sup> that when on the death of her own mother she and her brothers and sisters were thrown into Bhubon Mohan's family, this lady treated them as if they were her own children, in the spirit of the good old days before the Brahmo Samaj had become too entirely individualistic.

We also learn from Lady Bose that she was of a very benevolent disposition,\* entertaining a large number of friends, and giving away in charity to the sick and poor all that she could lay by. She was also a woman in whom the sense of duty had been awakened in the highest form, and this along with her strength and conservatism made her a peculiar type of Indian womanhood.

<sup>1</sup> Wife of the eminent Bengali scientist, Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose, F.R.S.

Chitta Ranjan's parents were both of amiable social disposition, and, though belonging to a dissenting church, they found a special delight in retaining an intimate association with people of their own native village and community, in this differing from the bulk of members of the Brahmo Samaj in those early days. Unfortunately for this Church and for Bengal, a large number of Brahmos of mid-Victorian days lived a life of their own, quite detached from the rest of the community. They took everything from the West and hardly anything from the East, and to all intents and purposes were anglicized and denationalized. Chitta Ranjan's parents made a refreshing departure in this matter, and this spirit of close association with their kith and kin of the orthodox church, and a natural sympathy with their habits of life, went a long way in shaping the character of their illustrious son as a true and representative Bengali.

Chitta Ranjan's father was something of a poet and had tried his prentice hand at amateurish verse-making. Bhubon Mohan Das had composed hymns and songs for the Brahmo Samaj, some of which were at one time much in vogue. Chitta Ranjan, certainly, inherited his poetic faculty from his father, but as we shall see in a later chapter, he could not be counted in the front rank of Bengali poets of his day. Prompted by an incipient literary ambition, he had from his early youth tried to keep himself in touch with all the leading literary men of the province.

But the intense emotionalism of which Chitta Ranjan gave such ample and eloquent demonstration in his mature years, was not inherited from either of his parents. He acquired this instinct very early in life from a close contact with men and women of the Brahmo Samaj, whose idealism had almost a family likeness to that of the Pilgrim Fathers of America, the Quakers of England and the Huguenots of France.

When Chitta Ranjan was a mere boy the first throb of political life was beginning to pulsate in Bengal. With the Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon,<sup>1</sup> which commenced when Chitta

<sup>1</sup> See Blunt's *India under Ripon*.

Ranjan was only a boy of eleven, a new flood came over Bengal and deposited a rich alluvium in which the new plant of national self-consciousness found congenial soil.<sup>1</sup>

The extreme racial bitterness aroused over the unfortunate Ilbert Bill, which we shall describe in a later chapter, also seems to have made an abiding impression on him, and appears to have given to his political life a peculiar colour and complexion.

It will thus be seen that, instead of being a mere freak, or a chance hero, or a hothouse exotic, he was the natural and legitimate product of the atmosphere and environment in which he was born. He of course developed in his youth and mature life most of the powers, talents and instincts that he had inherited, and nourished and cultivated all that he had received from the world forces of his day.

<sup>1</sup> During the period of this ferment, a number of high-grade colleges were established in Calcutta by non-official private enterprise. Pundit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar founded the "Metropolitan Institution", Ananda Mohan Bose the "City College", and Surendra Nath Banerjea the "Ripon College"—institutions which soon came to fill a great educational need in the province. At this period also, a large number of newspapers were started in Calcutta. Among these, the most notable were the *Indian Nation*, edited by the late Mr. N. N. Ghose, *Hope*, edited by the late Mr. Amritlal Roy, the *Bangabasi*, edited by the late Babu Jogendra Nath Bose, and the *Sanjibani*, edited by Mr. Krishna Kumar Mitter. Of these, the first two have ceased to exist.

Quite a number of credit societies, under the name of Loan Offices, also came to be established at this time in all parts of Bengal making short work of the system of usury which was till that time a great curse throughout the province.

## CHAPTER III

### EDUCATION AND EARLY LIFE

WHEN Chitta Ranjan first went to school, his parents had removed from Pataldanga Street to Peepulpatty Road in Bhowanipur, a southern suburb of Calcutta. At that time, the London Missionary Society's Institution<sup>1</sup> at Bhowanipur, with Mr. Ashton as its Principal and Mr. J. N. Farquhar as the latest recruit to its staff, was one of the leading educational institutions of the city. In 1878, he joined this school and in every form he led his class-mates, but unlike the general run of boys of his generation, who were mostly staid, sober and bookish, he was truant, bright and vivacious. He passed his Entrance Examination in 1886, after having failed in the previous year.

When he had got through his Entrance Examination he joined the Presidency College. At this time he assisted the present writer to organize the "Undergraduates' Association", the principal object of which was to induce the authorities of the University of Calcutta to admit Bengali as an alternative second language for the Entrance and the First Arts Examinations. Chitta Ranjan and the present writer issued several statements to the Press and went from door to door, imploring every member of the Senate and the then Vice-Chancellor of the University, Sir William Hunter, to take the matter into their serious consideration. Of course, everybody then referred these two young enthusiasts to Dr. Gooroodas Banerjee, long the Nestor of higher education in Bengal, and afterwards the first Indian Vice-Chancellor of the University. He unfortunately took up a very hostile attitude from the outset, for he believed that once Bengali was included in the curriculum of the Entrance Examination, Sanskrit would be neglected, and higher education would

<sup>1</sup> This long standing and very useful institution ceased to exist in 1924.

receive a great set-back. It may be noted here that the "Undergraduates' Association" did not survive many months after Dr. Gooroodas Banerjee had assumed this attitude towards its principal objective, but the dreams of these two young men were more than fully realized, when, nearly twenty years after, Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee, perhaps the greatest educationist yet born in this country, took up this matter in right earnest, as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta. And yet another fifteen years after, in 1922, the University decided to introduce the vernacular as the medium of instruction and examination for the Matriculation and Intermediate Arts and Science Examinations.

While at the Presidency College, Chitta Ranjan joined, and at once became the leading figure of, the Students' Association, which had then been recently established as the principal organization of the young men of Bengal. Surendra Nath Banerjee, who had a few months before been dismissed from the Indian Civil Service, was its first President and he used this new platform to inspire young students of Calcutta with patriotic ideals. Here Chitta Ranjan Das sat at his feet to take his first lessons in public service and elocution. What an irony of fate that Chitta Ranjan should have devoted the last years of his life to humbling this teacher and master of his early youth and to pulling to pieces whatever reputation the Grand Old Man of Bengal had left to him in the last few years of his public life. The stories of Mazzini and Garibaldi, of Washington and Kossuth, were then in every Bengali student's mouth, and Chitta Ranjan certainly was inflamed by them. Yet this new love of country remained with most a mere academic sentiment and did not burn in their souls as an active passion and motive power in that formative period of their lives.

Chitta Ranjan's connection with the Students' Association, however, was cut short by his graduation in 1890. But he had failed to obtain Honours; he had never taken his academic studies very seriously, having idled through his college days.

Within a few months of his graduation he was sent by

his father to England to compete for the Indian Civil Service. After a couple of years' coaching under Wren and Gurney, he sat for the examination in 1892, but failed to get a place in the list of successful candidates. Before he sat for this examination, however, he had made several political speeches in England, repudiating an ugly insinuation of James Maclean's and supporting the candidature of Dadabhoy Naoroji for a seat in the House of Commons for Central Finsbury. It seems strange that Naoroji's success at the polls on this occasion was due in no very small measure to the support which such a young admirer could give him on the one side, and, on the other, from the adventitious aid which one of Queen Victoria's favourite Prime Ministers, the late Lord Salisbury, had unconsciously given to him by calling him a black man. Dadabhoy Naoroji happened to have a whiter skin than Lord Salisbury had, and the affront was therefore taken not as a personal one, but as an exhibition of racial arrogance. This set on edge the nerves of the electors of Central Finsbury and Naoroji easily walked into St. Stephen's.

In refuting the charge made by James Maclean that India was "conquered by the sword . . . and retained by it", young Chitta Ranjan flared up and retorted in the following manner at a meeting in Oldham, held under the presidency of W. E. Gladstone.

"Gentlemen, I was sorry to find it given expression to in Parliamentary speeches on more than one occasion that England conquered India by the sword, and by the sword must she keep it! England, Gentlemen, did no such thing; it was not her swords and bayonets that won for her this vast and glorious Empire; it was not her military valour that achieved this triumph, it was in the main a moral victory or a moral triumph. England might well be proud of it. But to attribute all this to the sword and then to argue that the policy of sword is the only policy that ought to be pursued in India is to my mind absolutely base and quite unworthy of an Englishman."

Some Indian biographers of Chitta Ranjan have suggested

that he was rejected by the Civil Service Commission because of these speeches. I think, however, that Chitta Ranjan failed to get into the Service only because in those days the Indian Civil Service had still the reputation of being a career for the heaven-born, so that some of the best students of Oxford and Cambridge, not as in these post-reform days, sought admission into it in very large numbers. Not being able to get into the Indian Civil Service, Chitta Ranjan, who had joined the Middle Temple some time before, turned his attention to the study of law and was called to the English Bar in the same year.

In 1893, he returned to India and got himself enrolled as a Barrister of the Calcutta High Court. Unfortunately for him, his father had then almost retired from active practice as a solicitor, and none of his friends could give him the backing which he so badly needed to make a good start in his profession. When he joined the Bar at Calcutta, it was crowded with great personalities. Among the celebrities of the Bar in those days were such men as Charles Paul, John Woodroffe, Griffith Evans, Monomohan Ghose, W. C. Bonnerjee, T. Palit, C. P. Hill, T. A. Apcar and M. P. Gasper. Lord Sinha has told us<sup>1</sup> in a very piquant recollection of his earliest days at the Bar (six years before Chitta Ranjan joined it) "that among the juniors were Raj Narain Mitter and Lal Mohon Ghose, William Garth and Arthur Dunne, all of them doing a fair amount of what was called junior work, besides a large number of unemployed juniors, mostly Indian, who had been trudging to and fro between their homes and the Bar Library for years, but had not succeeded in making any impression." Chitta Ranjan, like Lord Sinha, during the first few years of his legal practice, went the "daily round of almost hopeless waiting at the Bar Library in company of more than a hundred equally hopeless members of the learned brotherhood". His prospects at the Bar began to look desperate as years rolled by, and he at last found an agreeable occupation in the cultivation of letters. In 1895 his first book of poems called *Malancha* was

<sup>1</sup> In an article in the *Bengalee* in December, 1925.

published, and brought down upon him the hatred and dislike of the whole of the Brahmo Samaj. For some years afterwards he did not try his pen again at verse-making.

On the 3rd of December, 1897, he married according to Brahmo rites (Act 3 of 1873) Basanti Devi, the elder daughter of the late Mr. Barada Nath Halder, Dewan of the Bijni estate in Assam. The leading missionaries of the Brahmo Samaj refused to conduct the service at his wedding because of his pronounced atheistic and bohemian views of life.

From this time to 1905, Chitta Ranjan was ploughing a lonely furrow, making no headway either as a lawyer or as a man of letters. On top of this in 1906, he fell a victim to very cruel circumstances. His father, who was not then in the best of health, had, in addition to the debts he had been compelled to incur in previous years, stood security for a friend of his for nearly Rs. 40,000. This friend not having redeemed the security, Bhubon Mohan Das had to pay it himself, and this plunged him headlong into ruin. Not being able to pay this amount he and his son Chitta Ranjan, who had also taken up the responsibilities of his debts, went into the Insolvency Court together in June, 1906, for whatever relief such procedure might give them. Chitta Ranjan was very much distressed by these untoward events, but he lost neither nerve nor heart over the situation.

Though he kept himself behind the scenes at this time, he joined hands with Aurobindo Ghose, the flaming apostle of the extreme Nationalists, in starting the English weekly known as the *Bande Mataram*. In those fateful years, which saw the close of Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty and the beginning of Lord Minto's, the *Bande Mataram* with its vernacular newspapers called the *Sandhya* and the *Yugantar* made history in Bengal.

About this time an unexpected windfall came to him. One of his younger brothers, Basanta Ranjan Das, who had been adopted by a rich uncle, died early in life and left by a testament all his real property to their mother, who in her turn left this property to her two surviving sons Chitta Ranjan and Prafulla Ranjan. Prafulla Ranjan's share of the



property was sold to his brother Chitta Ranjan nearly twenty years ago, and, with this sale, Chitta Ranjan became the sole owner of the property known as 148 Russa Road, in which he lived like a prince for the better part of his life, and which he bequeathed a few months before his death to the country for the medical education of Indian women.

Chitta Ranjan had inherited from his parents one conservative ideal of the old Hindu home—a love for the joint family. In spite of his individualistic training in the Brahmo Samaj and in England, he pre-eminently retained his domestic affections, unlike W. C. Bonnerjee, Monomohan Ghose, Ananda Mohan Bose, T. Palit and other Indian leaders of the Bar of his time, who detached themselves from the joint family as soon as they had set up an independent practice. He looked and cared for the interest of every member of his father's household, and showed particular solicitude in meeting the wants of almost every one who was in difficulty. Of his two brothers, Basanta, who had been adopted by Kali Mohan Das, had ample resources of his own. His youngest brother Prafulla he took under his wing, and had him educated in England to qualify him for the Bar. He had five sisters, three of whom lived with him after their parents and husbands died, and he ministered to their earthly wants as long as he lived. Besides his own brothers and sisters, Chitta Ranjan extended financial help when he could to all friends, relations, and hangers-on of the family who looked to him as their earthly providence. Later on in life, when success came to him at the Bar, he extended his benevolence and generosity to a much wider circle of friends and admirers, and not infrequently even to chance applicants for his charity.

## . CHAPTER IV

### CHITTA RANJAN DAS AS A POET

AMONG the many aspirations of Chitta Ranjan Das, some of which were destined to be fulfilled, was his life-long aspiration for self-expression in poetry. There is in the mental and moral atmosphere of Bengal life a certain emotional quality, almost Celtic in its sensibility, which has for several centuries touched fine spirits to fine issues. Bengali poetry has been during recent times introduced to the world through the lyrical achievements of Rabindranath Tagore. But the most essential and characteristic of his lyric productions, though deeply influenced by the culture and learning of the West, affiliate themselves in their essential tone and temper to the poetry of the sixteenth-century poets of Bengal—those Vaishnava singers, who struck the deepest notes of human passion in the somewhat technical terminology of a mystic devotional cult. We observe the same yearning for the mystery of a love that lives not in the flesh, the same Shelleyan note of failing and “falling upon the thorns of life”, the same interweaving of the influences of Nature into the passions and emotions of the human breast and all “the tongueless vigil and the pain” of delicious emotional abandon. Chitta Ranjan was born an heir to the rich legacy of the emotional poetry of an earlier age and was temperamentally fitted to enjoy his spiritual heritage.

To say that Chitta Ranjan was a Bengali poet of the first rank would be to say too much. He had perhaps not a sufficient gift of originality. He introduces no novel themes ; he originates no new poetic forms ; he has no new message to deliver through his poetry. But an idealist by nature and temperament, he seizes on the essential qualities of Bengali poetry and breathes them through his poetical works like a delicate perfume. His work is small in volume, but even

within its small compass, an attentive reader may observe growth and evolution and gain sufficient insight into his mind and art. His earliest productions are somewhat imitative, dealing with the usual stock-in-trade of poetry, except perhaps here and there, as in the remarkable poems on Atheism and the *Life of a Harlot*. But he gradually sheds this imitative style, becomes more direct, clear and forceful in expression, and approaches closer to the spirit of old Vaishnava poetry. Along with it, there is an expansion of imagination and a widening of his outlook on life. As he comes nearer to the Vaishnava spirit, his poetry takes on a devotional ring, and, in his latest productions, which date down almost to his dying day, it becomes a free up-welling of tender religious emotion in the true Vaishnava spirit—a complete offering and surrender of self to the Divine Lover.

Chitta Ranjan's earliest production was a collection of lyrics, published in 1895, entitled *The Garden (Malancha)*. The poet was at that time a young man, fresh from England, filled with new ideas and a new zest for life. A passionate delight in beauty, a restless joy of life, an insatiate yearning to probe the pleasures and pains of existence to their deepest depths, invest these lyric pieces with an exaltation and excellence which raises them far above the average. But the fermentation of a new wine seems to be diffused through these lyrics. The happiness of a mind at peace with itself and the outside world is conspicuously absent. The following for example is the young poet's conception of love :

Thy love, O Beloved, is a keen-edged sword !  
 It drinks my life-blood night and day ;  
 Each new day,—with a new delight !  
 It dazzles by daylight and darkens at night.

Thy love, O Beloved, is like to a serpent,  
 It coils round and enfolds for aye my life.  
 Each breath,—a shower of death,  
 Each passionate kiss bites into the soul !

The poet loves to dwell on images of unhappy passion, blasted hope and disappointed love. The pale and pathetic

figure of mad Ophelia disturbs his soul with pity : she is a living tragedy of love :

Come, O crazy woman, come with the flowers in thy hands,  
Ask her not—for love's tragic story is writ in her eyes.

But of the lyric poems in this book those which created a furor among contemporary readers were the poems on Atheism and the poem *The Harlot*. The former represent the painful self-questionings of a mind adrift from the moorings of settled faith and conviction, while the latter is the glorification and idealization of the life of a harlot, girt round as it is with cruelties, disenchantments and shame. The poem entitled *My God* is the poignant cry of a soul in revolt against creation with its voiceless, insoluble mysteries. Says the poet :

This reinless, fiery, infinite revolt,  
Burdened with all the mystery of the world,  
Floats up like horrid poison in my heart,  
Diffusing poison through all life.  
The stricken soul lays down its burden at thy feet,  
O Mercy Infinite !

But God is dumb and dead—to all eager questions his only reply is eternal silence. For such a god, dead and dumb, the poet has no use. He would create his own God—the Beautiful God who loves and responds—in the solitude of his own stricken soul. The poem on *The Harlot* is as intense in its passionate pathos as it is bold in the complete rejection of conventional morality. The Harlot is the eternal Lady of Pain, Dolores, slaying herself by inches that the starved lust of the world may appease itself on her flesh and blood. Her life is one long and strenuous self-sacrifice—her shame is the world's pleasure, her sorrow the world's delight. The charge of downright immorality was levelled against this poem which was condemned by a very large section of his community. But what Edmund Gosse said of Swinburne's *Dolores* may be said of this poem also, viz. that it becomes one of the most poignantly moral poems in our literature by its very rejection of conventional morality.

Chitta Ranjan's next production was another collection of lyrics called *The Garland (Mala)*, published in 1904. In these lyrics the tone is graver and the thought deeper. The spirit of restless intellectual revolt that characterizes the first production and runs to the extreme, to the rejection and denial of God, is here at rest. The poet feels on the other hand the influence of a Presence "that disturbs his soul with the joy of elevated thoughts". He has just emerged from the labyrinth and maze of an atheistic philosophy and is yet a long distance from the conception of a loving personal God—the Vaishnava God—to whom the song-offerings of his last years are all dedicated. This new light of spiritual experience shines through the following lines in one of the lyrics :

In the surrounding twilight, thou hast put  
A lighted taper on thy window-sill :  
All my mind takes light  
From the golden light of thy taper !

Further on :

The dream-like charm of evening enfolds the sky,  
A pale enchantment sheets all the earth :  
But Truth there amidst springs suddenly to light,  
In the light of that taper !

Unto this light-giving Presence the whole soul of the poet turns with an ineffable yearning, such as could be paralleled only by the essential spirit of some of the loveliest devotional lyrics of Tagore's *Gitanjali*. In the lyrics of this collection again, the delight in beauty is of a mellower tone, and the sensuousness of love is attuned to a longing for self-immolation at the feet of the Beloved. Says the poet :

All the songs that fulfil my life  
Take life from thy life ;  
Let my senses swim in the touch of thy life,  
Drown me in its delight.

Again :

I shall throw wide the doors of my heart  
Spread out for thee all my beauty, all my dream ;

I shall lay as a carpet 'neath thy feet  
 All that is soft and tender in me,—  
 O make, O make my life thy footstool !

The sensuousness of the love-poems in this work is so highly refined and rarified as to border almost on a devotional attitude; the Beloved becomes almost divine. This collection fitly ends with a quiet invocation to silence—silence that fills the soul with its still harmony and unperturbed majesty, such as broods over the Himalayas, over all the creepers and trees, and over the splendid birth of the sun in the lap of the silent sky. The note struck in *The Garland*, the quiet, pensive note of peace, contemplation, devotion and yearning, is intensified and fulfilled in a later collection of poems entitled *The Heart-Reader (Antaryami)*, published in 1915; while the expansion of the poet's imagination, of which it bears proofs in his higher reach of thought and profounder conception of human passion and emotion, is fully reflected in *The Song of the Sea (Sagar-Sangit)*<sup>1</sup> published in 1913.

This latter work, which on its publication took the Bengali reading public by storm, is a collection of poems in which the changing aspects of the sea in the varying lights and shades of day and night are exhibited in relation to the ever-changing moods of the poet's mind. Between the soul of the poet and the sea there is a sort of pre-established harmony, and, as the poet's moods take colour from the aspects of the sea, so do the latter take colour from the poet's moods, till the objective and the subjective seem to blend and mingle and become as one. The keynote is struck at the very beginning :

Unhoped for, wondrous one, ever elusive,  
 Wait awhile that I weave thee in my song.

Stay yet awhile  
 And with the melodies of the sea and the free  
 Soundless rhythm of my heart,

<sup>1</sup> The *Song of the Sea* has been beautifully rendered into English by Aurobindo Ghose and recently by J. A. Chapman.

I will thee enrhythm in manner yet passing beyond all rhythm.

Bound then thou wilt be in the enduring solitudes of my heart.<sup>1</sup>

The light-encircled dawn, the fresh and bright morning, the dazzling moon, the fading twilight, the gentle evening with braided hair, the mystery and silence of night—thus pass by day and night in rotation, but the poet and the sea stand face to face, locked in a steadfast, mutual gaze. The ripples laugh with the fresh breeze, the clouds float up from the horizon, the long shadows envelop the sea, and the storm comes striding along, lashing waves to foaming fury—and still the poet and the sea are face to face in an inviolable communion. This is the attitude in which these wonderful sea-songs, for which English poetry has no parallel, are composed.

Inset in this collection of sea-songs are descriptions of natural phenomena like the dawn and the storm at sea which seem to be instinct with the mythopoeic power of singers of Vedic India or of Homeric Greece. For congregated power of description, few storm-scenes can surpass the following :

The myriad serpents of infinitude  
 Their countless hoods above thy waves extrude.  
 I hear 'mid the loud storm-winds and the night  
 A voice arise of terror infinite ;  
 Death's shoutings in a darkness without shore .  
 Join like a million Titans' angry roar.

The personification of death in the following couplet reminds one of similar personifications in Vedic poetry :

O high, stark Death, ascetic, proud and free,  
 Draw back thy trident of eternity.

Or the lofty sublimity of the following conception :

The lotus of creation like a rhyme  
 Trembling with its own joy and sorrow long  
 On the harmonious ocean of old Time  
 Has floated, heaven above the infinite song.

<sup>1</sup> All quotations from the *Song of the Sea* are given in Aurobindo Ghose's translation.

Or the following description of dawn, the *Ushas* of Vedic mythology :

Behold the perfect-gloried dawn has come  
Far-floating from eternity, her home,  
Her limbs are clad in silver light of dreams  
Her brilliant influence on the water streams.

An expansive imagination that can seize simultaneously upon the delicate details of sea-scenery with all its variegated tracery of light and shade and gather them up into one vast sweeping view, bounded only by the crescent line of the horizon, is characteristic of these sea-songs, which close upon a supreme note of mystic suggestiveness :

Burns on that other shore the mystic light  
That never was lit here by eve or dawn ?  
Is't there, the song eternal, infinite,  
None ever heard from earthly instruments drawn ?  
Sits there any like myself who yearns,  
Thirsting for unknown touches on the soul ?  
Is't there, the heart's dream ? Unsurpassable burns  
The shadowy self we seek, there bright and whole ?  
My thirst is great, O mighty one ! deep, deep,  
The thirst is in my heart unsatisfied.  
Ah, drown me in thy dumb unfathomed sleep  
Or carry to that ungrasped other side.

We have said that a new note—of peace, contemplation, devotion and spiritual yearning—is struck in *The Garland*. In the surrounding darkness, the poet espies a taper lighted for him on the window-sill. The light steadily gains strength for him till he discovers by its gleam the beckoning figure—the personal God he has created in the solitude of his own soul—God the lover, the dweller in the human heart, for the love of Whom the whole soul of the poet thrills with a rapture hitherto undreamt of and unknown. The next work, *The Heart-Reader (Antaryami)* is thus significant of the growth of the poet's soul. The spirit of the lyrics in this small collection seems indeed to be double-faced. One aspect is turned towards the philosophy of the cultured neo-Vaishnavism, popularized by the greater teacher and reformer



of our time, Vijoy Krishna Goswami, while the other is turned towards the simple human passions and emotions, directed to spiritual objects, that make up the peculiar tone and temper of Vaishnava poetry of the sixteenth century. Devotional ecstasy centring round an intensely human and personal God is the keynote of these poems. The poet's God is the Beloved one, the Playmate and Companion, the Charmer, the Joy of Life, the very apple of the eye, one who comes with his flute to charm away all idle fears and apprehensions. The conception of the Vaishnava God—the external playful Boy who ravishes the heart of the world with mystic music on his flute—has not yet emerged. But the poet finds himself in the vestibule of the Vaishnava temple—he has distant glimpses of the Holy of Holies and thrills with the ecstasy of it. In some of these lyrics, the poet slides almost unconsciously into the very style and language as well as the vein of thought of the Vaishnava poets of old.

This Vaishnavic strain is the predominant note of *Budding Youth (Kishore-Kishore)*. The poet does not indeed employ the terminology of the Vaishnava cult, but he catches up its intense lyric cry. The thrill of a love, human in its essence but divine in its object, plumbing the depths of passion and soaring to the heights of ecstasy, strongly pulsates through these soulful lyrics. The idea that animates them is that of the eternality of love. Love fulfils itself in a moment, but to that moment's fulfilment do the countless ages roll on; the flower blooms forth of a morning to receive the kiss of the sun, but the whole cosmic life has wrought to bring the little flower to bloom. So, asks the poet, "This our meeting beneath the twilight sky—could this ever be a passing phase of the hour? See I not in the light of thine eye the gleam that has haunted me from life to life? Have I not known and loved thee through all the ages, through all my births and rebirths, through time and eternity till this moment of meeting again under this twilight sky? The yearnings of a hundred births have found therein their crowning consummation." This idea is a characteristic

Vaishnavic idea which finds its most poignant expression in the cry of Vidyapati, the first Vaishnava poet of Bengal : " During countless births, have I fed on thy beauty and the eyes are not satisfied yet ; for a million years have I placed my bosom on thine, yet my thirst is not quenched."

In the poems written towards the close of his life, the poet's Vaishnavic trend grows more pronounced. The theme is the same—the yearning love the most poignant pain whereof is the most thrilling pleasure. But it becomes more real and vital in those last productions and breaks through all shackles of art, as it were, by its very vital force. In truth they approach nearest to the lyrical effusions of the Bengali poets of the sixteenth century in the artlessness of their presentation and intensity of appeal. Most of these lyrics thrill into song and have been set to music. In these songs emerges at last the God the poet had long searched for in the trackless wilderness of atheism—the human personal God, the Eternal Boy who makes and breaks creation in play, He with the lovely braided hair and the mystic flute, standing in the shade of the ever-green Tamala tree. With this Boy-lover, the Beloved of the world, the poet keeps his tryst, eager yet fearful, yearning yet hesitant, with the soul aflame with a love in which " pain melts in tears and is pleasure, Death tingles with blood and is life ". There is little colour in these poems, little of imagery, almost no attempt at artistic effect, but the appeal comes straight from the bare, sheer, penetrating power of sincerity. Besides, an enchanted atmosphere, replete with reminiscences of Vaishnava lyrics, seems to hang round and brood over them.

Chitta Ranjan was not a poet by profession. His life, short as it was, was a constant strain and stress between law and politics. But the dust of daily life never choked the hidden springs of idealism in his soul. This profound, pristine idealism sought to express itself, sometimes in humanitarian work, sometimes in philanthropic charities, sometimes in patriotic endeavours in which also idealism got too often the better of practical considerations, and sometimes in poetry and *belles-lettres*. That is how Chitta Ranjan

Das came to be a poet. It was but the inner urge of an idealistic longing that "having seen, must ever be."

His Bengali poetry is certainly not the work of a dilettante. It was not with him a diversion or relaxation from the more serious labours of the day, as cultivation of literature sometimes is with busy lawyers and politicians in Europe. Through his poetry, his soul speaks to us, his personality is reflected in his art, and the lyric cry that we hear is not in the least play-acting or mimicry, but a reverberation from the very depths of his being. No imitative poetry can ever hold the mirror up to the poet's life, and the poetry of Chitta Ranjan Das reflects with startling clearness all the various phases of his life, from the first faltering utterances of his youth in *The Garden* to the enraptured lyrical ecstasies of his last years.

During the period that Chitta Ranjan Das wrote poetry, the literature of Bengal was, as it perhaps still is, under the spell of the genius of Rabindra Nath Tagore. It is next to impossible for a Bengali poet of to-day to escape the subtle influence in matter and style of this masterful figure in modern Bengali literature. The early poetry of Chitta Ranjan Das is touched by this influence, though not dominated by it, while in his later poetry, specially in the songs composed during his last years, Chitta Ranjan breaks almost completely away from it. He introduces a new tone, old-new and new-old, which had been quiescent in Bengali poetry since the enchantingly sweet and intensely emotional lyrical outbursts of Vidyapati and Govindadas. The influence of Western poetic art had served to suppress this poetic tone and introduced certain artificialities of thought and style into modern Bengali poetry. Chitta Ranjan aimed at piercing through all these artificialities, acquired from foreign sources, to the large primitive simplicities of an earlier era, and in a profound and penetrating critical essay on the *Lyric Poetry of Bengal* (written in Bengali) he dilates on the essential differences between the tone and temper of the old Vaishnavic lyric school and the new lyric school of Rabindra Nath Tagore. In Chitta Ranjan's view, it is the older school that is more



**RABINDRA NATH TAGORE**

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typical, more representative, of the soil, of the peculiar genius and mentality of Bengal. How far Chitta Ranjan has succeeded in calling back the spirit of this school into Bengali poetry, it is for the future to decide. He had not worked out the vein, ~~struck~~ in the poetry of the closing years of his life, before he was called away from his earthly labours. But he has surely pointed to the way along which some future lyric poets of Bengal will doubtless travel.

## CHAPTER V

### THE STORM BURSTS

IN 1905, Bengal entered into a new chapter of her political life. The late Marquess Curzon, then Viceroy and Governor-General of India, had decided in that year, and secured the sanction of the Secretary of State, to re-distribute the jurisdiction of the lieutenant-governorship of Bengal, and carve two different provinces out of it. The Eastern districts of Bengal belonging to the Dacca, Chittagong and Rajshahi divisions were taken from the province of Bengal and amalgamated with the Brahmaputra and Surma Valley districts of Assam, to form an independent province under the name of Eastern Bengal and Assam, placed under a lieutenant-governor; and the remaining districts of the Presidency and Burdwan divisions, with the whole of Bihar and Orissa, were allowed to continue under the old name of Bengal, with a lieutenant-governor at their head.

Lord Curzon took this unusual procedure under the specious plea of administrative convenience and efficiency, but the people of Bengal regarded this *coup d'état* as a deliberate attempt to break up their solidarity, and to paralyse their united efforts to offer a common front of opposition to the Government. The Partition of Bengal set the Ganges on fire, and Bengalis in all parts of the provinces joined together in an attempt to undo this great administrative blunder.<sup>1</sup>

Immediately after the official announcement of the Partition scheme, on August 7th, the Hon'ble Maharaja Sir Manindra Chandra Nandy of Kasimbazar, presiding over

<sup>1</sup> The agitation against the Partition of Bengal was principally conducted by the Indian Association of Calcutta, founded by Surendra Nath Banerjea and Ananda Mohan Bose in 1876. From 1880 to 1920 this Association remained the most active and prominent centre of public and political life in Bengal.

an enormous gathering of the citizens of Calcutta, inaugurated the movement for the boycott of all foreign goods as a measure of retaliation. This movement came to be known in later days as the great Swadeshi movement. The day, October 16th, when this measure came into operation,<sup>1</sup> was observed by the Bengali people all over the two provinces as a day of fasting and mourning, and came to be known as the Federation or the Rakhi Bandhan Day,<sup>2</sup> at the suggestion of Rabindra Nath Tagore. Ananda Mohan Bose, an ex-President of the Indian National Congress, and perhaps the most respected son of Bengal of his time, was carried from his sick-bed in an arm-chair on this occasion to lay the foundation of a hall in Upper Circular Road, Calcutta, which was to symbolize the federation of Eastern and Western Bengal.<sup>3</sup> Meetings were held all over the two provinces to cement the union between the divided districts. Cartloads of British cloth were stacked in the market places throughout the provinces and burnt to incite popular indignation. Bands of young men left their schools and colleges and dissociated themselves from the education given by the University of Calcutta, which came to be described under the sobriquet of *Golamkhana*, meaning a factory for the output of trained slaves or ministerial officers on the model of London city clerks. A nucleus was formed for devising the syllabus and organizing the courses of a system of "national education",

<sup>1</sup> The Bengal Partition Bill was passed into law at Simla on the 29th of September, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Rakhi is a coloured thread which is generally bound on the wrists of friends and relations as a symbol of unity and good wishes.

<sup>3</sup> On the day when Ananda Mohan Bose laid the foundation of the Federation Hall in Parsee Bagan (Upper Circular Road in Calcutta), a National Fund was organized in Baghbazar for the purpose of giving necessary help and stimulus to the indigenous weaving industry of Bengal as a sequel to the propaganda of the boycott of Manchester goods. Nearly one lakh of rupees (about £8,000) was collected on this occasion. But this was not the first National Fund raised in Bengal under that pretentious name. A sum of twenty thousand rupees was collected by Surendra Nath Banerjea during Lord Ripon's Viceroyalty for the purpose of carrying on political agitation in the country. The first fund still lies at the disposal of the Executive Committee of the Indian Association, and the second has been entrusted to the charge of a Committee appointed for its administration.



which, in due course resulted in the establishment of the "National Council of Education of Bengal".<sup>1</sup>

When the agitation about the Partition of Bengal had reached its height there was hardly any Bengali town or village where meetings were not held to condemn the measure, invoke divine aid, and to maintain the union of all the districts in the new and the old provinces. At these meetings the National Proclamation used to be read with great ceremony and decision and the Swadeshi vow administered to all the audience almost with a religious ceremonial. The National Proclamation was framed in the following words :

"Whereas the Government has thought fit to effectuate the Partition of Bengal in spite of the universal protest of the Bengali nation, we hereby pledge and proclaim that we as a people shall do everything in our power to counteract the evil effects of the dismemberment of our province, and to maintain the integrity of our race. So God help us."<sup>2</sup>

The Swadeshi vow ran thus :

"Invoking God Almighty to be our Witness, and standing in the presence of after generations, we take this solemn vow that, so far as practicable, we shall use home-made articles and abstain from the use of foreign articles. So God help us."

The authority of the two Lieutenant-Governors was openly challenged everywhere, and the orders and notifications of the Governments were openly defied and broken. British prestige lost all its charm and spell, and British Civilians, once regarded as almost *in loco parentum*, now came to be looked upon as so many real and active enemies of the people. People snapped their fingers at the policemen whose red turbans and batons had inspired fear in the hearts of several generations of Bengalis. In the district of Backergunge, in Eastern Bengal, the instructions of Aswini Kumar Dutt in all public affairs were so loyally followed that even the visit of

<sup>1</sup> Established in August, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> Before Lord Curzon's Partition scheme was given effect to, there was a general lack of sympathy and solidarity between Eastern and Western Bengal. The people of Western Bengal ridiculed the dialect, accent, and customs of the people of Eastern Bengal, who returned the compliment. Lord Curzon's Partition, like a magic wand, removed all this misunderstanding and ill-will.



SIR SURIENDRA NATH BANERJEE

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Sir Bamfylde Fuller, the first Lieutenant-Governor of the new province, was tabooed, and the importation of Liverpool salt and Manchester piece goods was completely suspended. The tables were so completely turned in the course of a few months, that, instead of the people caring any more for the sahib and the paharawallah, it was the European civilian and the white birds of passage out in this country who now began to dread the sinister looks of the once very docile Bengalis.<sup>1</sup>

Indian feeling ran so high, that to do away with the semblance and symbol of a foreign rule, Surendra Nath Banerjea, then the accredited leader of the Bengali people, was crowned as the head of Bengal—a ceremony which Anglo-Indian critics and candid friends not unjustly interpreted as an act of treason.

One of the most noticeable features of the new national awakening was the development of Bengali literature to a high pitch of patriotic expression. Bankim Chandra Chatterji's *Ananda Math*, though written many years previously, now became the most widely read book in the province, and several translations of it appeared in English and other Indian languages. The famous song *Bande Mataram* in this book became so popular that it came to occupy the place of a national anthem.<sup>2</sup> Some of the dramas of Dwijendra Lal Roy<sup>3</sup> reflected the national spirit in a most inspiring manner, and there was hardly any important town or village in Bengal in which one or other of his works was not put on the stage.\* When acted on the stage these dramas led to considerable popular excitement, so much so, that the Government thought fit to suppress some of them. The national songs composed during this period by Dwijendra Lal Roy, Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, Mrs. Sarala Devi Chowdhurani, Mr. A. F. Sen and the late Rajani Kathna Sen "smote on the heart of the people as on a giant's harp, awakening out

<sup>1</sup> This look became so threatening to the European that a District Magistrate of Backergunge named it the "Barisal stare", and Anglo-Indian journalists used the phrase as current coin for some time.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>3</sup> The principal works of this writer are *Mewar Patan* (*The Fall of Mewar*), *Shah Jehan*, and *Durgadas*.

of it a storm and a tumult such as Bengal had never known through the long centuries of her political serfdom." A large number of histories glorifying Hindu and Mahomedan rule and condemning England's work in India<sup>1</sup> now appeared in Bengali and were devoured by thousands of enthusiastic men and women who previously had not read a single Bengali book excepting the translations of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharat*.<sup>2</sup> Local ballads were recovered from age-old dust, through the careful researches of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad and Rai Bahadur Dinesh Chandra Sen, and published to infuse into the new generation the true ideals of Bengali life such as they were before the advent of the British, and great pressure was put upon the University of Calcutta to admit the Bengali language into the curriculum of all its examinations. The vernacular Press of Bengal also became at this time a great power in the land, and not only did some of the metropolitan newspapers count their circulation by tens of thousands,<sup>3</sup> but even small towns and villages began to publish their own organs as the nerve-centres of public opinion.

Nor was it in the development of a national literature that the new national sentiment found adequate expression. The keen intellectual environment of the Tagores of Jorasanko found about this time an outlet in the foundation of a new school of oriental art where beauty and the technique of art were conveyed in canvas not according to western methods and canons, but according to a purely eastern conception as laid down in the ancient Sanskrit work entitled the *Silpa Shastra*. Dr. Abanindra Nath Tagore and his brother Gagenendra Nath Tagore, cousins of the author of the *Gitanjali*, with such lieutenants as O. C. Ganguli, Nandalal Bose and Asit Galder, have given such an impetus to this neo-Indian ideal of painting that it is now recognized all over the civilized world as a magnificent contribution to the world's culture. The new school is consciously and intentionally

<sup>1</sup> Principally Akshay Kumar Maitra's *Shiraj-ud-Dowallah*.

<sup>2</sup> The two most popular epics of the Hindu.

<sup>3</sup> The chief of these papers were the *Basumati*, the *Hitawadi* and the *Bangabasi*.

idealistic. Its masters sought to escape from the photographic vision and secure an introspective outlook on things which take one away from the material objective of life to a rarified atmosphere of beauty and romance.

In science Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose, a brother-in-law of Chitta Ranjan, revived the old Vedic idea of life in everything, and made wonderful researches in plant physiology. When he invented his new machine called the crescograph, to indicate the heart beats of plants, European scientists refused to accept his theory or his experiments seriously. But with his persistent efforts it did not take long to demonstrate to the world that the eastern idea of life in plants and flowers was not a myth or a figment of the imagination. With Sir Jagadis Bose's researches, Bengal's place in the scientific world was established beyond challenge.

The revolutionary atmosphere in India had not been created all on a sudden. In India, as elsewhere, it has passed through three definite stages. The first period was one of unrest, brought about by the cumulative effect of a century of administration, chiefly carried on in the interest of England and the English people. This period of unrest was further continued and intensified from the time when India came under the Crown, in 1858, till the end of the century, covering the better part of the Victorian era. A white and alien bureaucracy administered, all these years, the affairs of this country. This period was principally noted by Bengal public opinion, for the neglect of real Indian interests and for the flouting of the opinion of an articulate and educated people.

A case in point of such flouting may be recited here :

It was not before the end of the nineteenth century, that non-official opinion came sharply into conflict with the ways of the Indian bureaucracy. For some time, the independence of the Indian members of the Calcutta Corporation had been giving trouble to the Calcutta Secretariat, and Sir Ashley Eden, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in the early nineties, described the Municipal Board of Calcutta and all similar representative institutions in Bengal as " a sickly plant in its own native soil ". It was not, however, till about 1897,

that the acute difference between the Government and the Indian members of the Calcutta Corporation came to a head, and, in opening a pumping station in Calcutta, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, condemned the Calcutta Corporation as "an armoury of talk and an arsenal of delays". Protests were made, meetings held, statistics quoted of work done and representations sent to the Government against the unjust observations of the Lieutenant-Governor. But, instead of admitting the injustice of his indictment, the Lieutenant-Governor introduced a Bill in the Bengal Legislative Council to neutralize the activities of the Indian members by establishing two more co-ordinating authorities independent of their control. After the Bill had passed through the Select Committee, Lord Curzon, then Viceroy, interfered with the measure, and wanted the Bengal Government to give it a more stringent and anti-popular character. The Local Government was directed to reduce the number of elected members and place them numerically on the same footing with the nominated members, giving the official element a standing majority with the help of a Government-appointed President.

At this, Surendra Nath Banerjea, subsequently a Minister of the Government of Bengal, Bhupendra Nath Basu, latterly a member of the India Council at Whitehall, Narendra Nath Sen, editor of the *Indian Mirror*, Malin Behary Sircar, a leading merchant of Calcutta, and twenty-four other members of the Calcutta Corporation resigned their offices and came out of the Corporation as a protest against the flouting of their opinions by the authorities. This was the first open breach between the official mind of Bengal and representative public opinion in the province.

Closely following the agitation over the Mackenzie Act, which gave the Corporation of Calcutta a most reactionary constitution, the public mind of Bengal was greatly exercised by some judicial revelations of an extraordinary nature. Aubray Percival Pennel, an Irishman by birth, had joined the Indian Civil Service in 1885, and, in 1899, was acting as the District and Sessions Judge of Chapra, then a district of

Bengal. In this capacity as the head Judicial Officer of the District, he heard on appeal a case in which one Narasingh Singh had been convicted by a Mahomedan Deputy Magistrate to two months' rigorous imprisonment. The facts of the case may be briefly stated as follows :

Narasingh Singh was a police constable working in the district of Jalpaiguri, and, in July, 1899, came home on leave to his native village of Fulwari, in the district of Chapra. In August of the same year, Mr. Corbett, the Assistant Superintendent of Police of Chapra, and Mr. Simpkins, the District Engineer, came together to Narasingh's village to attend to some repairs in the *bundh* (embankment), and asked Narasingh to give a hand to these repairs. Narasingh refused, and the two officials, provoked by his impudence, fell upon him and assaulted him so severely that he had to be removed to the station hospital at Chapra. After he had been admitted into the hospital, Captain Maddox, the District Civil Surgeon, examined his injuries, and, fearing that he would go to court, reported the matter to the members of the station club. Narasingh was taken from the hospital to the bungalow of Mr. Twidell, the officiating District Magistrate of Chapra, where after a hurried consultation between this gentleman, Mr. Bradley, the District Superintendent of Police, and Captain Maddox, he was arrested on the spot and was sent up to take his trial under sections 353 and 186, I.P.C. Narasingh's case was tried by a Mahomedan Deputy Magistrate, who convicted him as we have seen. On the case coming up on appeal, Mr. Pennel acquitted Narasingh and passed very severe strictures upon the trying magistrate and several of the European officials implicated in the case.

During the hearing of this case, the Mahomedan Deputy Magistrate admitted on oath before Mr. Pennel that he had gone to Mr. Twidell's house to discuss this case, as he had done on many previous occasions. He further stated : " When cases are disposed of and magistrates do not like it, they find fault. And so I settled it beforehand." This was a very broad admission of the evils of the combination of judicial and executive functions in officials of British India.



But while the people were amazed at the revelations, Mr. Pennel was penalized by the Government for this judgement and transferred from Chapra to Noakhali, then considered a very undesirable station for its insalubrious climate and its hopeless distance from the metropolis. But before Mr. Pennel had been many months at this new station, he again found a case where the combination of judicial and executive functions had been conspiring to defeat the ends of justice.

A man named Ismail Jagirdar, who lived within two miles of the town of Noakhali, was murdered one evening while he was returning home, and his dead body was thrown into a pond. Next morning his corpse was found by his son, who informed the police immediately, and one Sadak Ali and three other Mahomedans who were enemies of the murdered man were arrested on suspicion. During the trial it was found that these people had a friend and relation in a police officer named Osman Daroga, who was doing his level best to shield the culprits and prevent the necessary evidence being produced against them. The District Superintendent of Police, Mr. Riley, also got himself enmeshed in Osman Daroga's wiles, and made no little effort to turn the prosecution into a failure. In this case several broad hints came to Mr. Pennel from Government headquarters in Calcutta and the headquarters of the Chittagong division. In spite of all this, Mr. Pennel not only passed sentence of capital punishment on Sadak Ali and condemned his accomplices to transportation for life, but had Mr. Riley arrested on the spot for tendering false witness before him on oath.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Pennel's judgement was delivered on February 15th, 1901, and, in the course of this portentous document, he spared nobody from Sir John Woodburne, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, to Osman Daroga. He trampled upon most of the prejudices and traditions by which the Indian Civil Service had sworn all the time and exposed with a merciless pen the tricks by which the administration of justice had been vitiated in so many cases. In due course Mr. Pennel paid the penalty of his indiscretions. On the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Riley was arrested under Section 466/201/196, I.P.C.

6th of March, just three weeks after the date of this judgement, the government of Lord Curzon suspended him and a few weeks later he was dismissed. The curtain fell upon the drama with this drastic interference of the Government of India, but the people of India found in this episode enough food for reflection and bitterness.

It must be admitted, however, that the administration in the country in the latter Victorian era was sometimes punctuated by acts of benevolent despotism such as Lord Ripon's repeal of the Vernacular Press Act, the Rendition of Mysore, the inauguration of a scheme of local self-Government, the Ilbert Bill (a bill intended to remove the disqualifications of the Indian magistracy to try European offenders), the revision of the Indian Councils Act in 1892, during Lord Lansdowne's viceroyalty, and the effort of Sir Andrew Scoble to raise the "age of consent" in India. The punishment meted out by Lord Curzon to certain officers of the 9th Lancers for maltreating some Indians, and the legislative measures passed under the inspiration of the same Viceroy for the preservation of ancient monuments of India, may also be cited as some of the most creditable works of British rule in India.

On the other side, measures like Lord Lytton's Vernacular Press Act, the contemptuous reference of Lord Dufferin to the growing intelligentsia of India as a "microscopic minority" and his brushing aside of the demand for the separation of judicial and executive functions as a "counsel of perfection", Sir Charles Elliott's notorious notification restricting the scope and area of trial by jury in Bengal, and the niggardly grants for famine, sanitation, and education, made without exception by Viceroy after Viceroy, with an intermittent increase of the duty on salt, prepared the soil in which the revolutionary mentality of a later day was to flourish.

The persistent economic depression, continued from generation to generation on account of the scarcity of occupations for all classes of people, particularly the middle classes, produced a crisis about the end of the last century; and for the first time young Bengal awoke to consciousness of the heavy toll taken by the white rulers. "Much poverty

and much discontent ", as Lord Bacon had observed three centuries ago, " prepared the ground in which revolutions germinate ", and Bengal proved no exception. At this stage the several triumphs of Boer arms over the British, and of the Japanese over the Russians and the subsequent campaigns of the Irish Fenians and Egyptian Nationalists, had opened a new horizon to impressionable idealists in India and stimulated them to revolutionary activities.

It was Lord Curzon, however, who inaugurated the second stage, that of revolutionary mentality, by certain blazing indiscretions. His twelve administrative problems, with his tortuous and extravagant methods of solving them, his creation of a new Frontier Province as well as of a new Department of Commerce and Industry in the Imperial secretariat, his attempt to officialize the universities, were taken as proof that he had come to India not to promote the welfare of the people, but rather to establish his own fame as the high priest of administrative efficiency. For the first time in the history of British India there was set up the fetish of centralization and the worship of expert scientific and administrative knowledge. Lord Curzon disdainfully ignored the great need of constitutional and administrative reforms and except in trying to promote the interest of agriculture in a certain way and in preserving old and historical monuments, he took no thought for the wishes of the people. He threw all financial prudence to the winds, while at the same time he persistently flouted Indian opinion.

Circulars after circulars<sup>1</sup> were issued, both from Simla and

<sup>1</sup> Mr. P. C. Lyon, Chief Secretary to the new Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam, issued two circulars under date November 8th, 1905, directing the attention of the Commissioner of the Dacca Division and the Director of Public Instructions against students joining political movements and the shouting of " Bande Mataram " in open streets and meetings. A similar circular was issued by Mr. Carlyle on behalf of the Government of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, under date October 10th, 1905, and another by Sir Herbert Risley, Home Secretary of the Government of India. To counteract the effect of these circulars, an organization under the name of the " Anti-Circular Society " was established in Calcutta with Messrs. Surendra Nath Banerjea and Krishna Kumar Mitter at its head which carried on a " raging and tearing " propaganda for the boycott of British goods and the shouting of " Bande Mataram " by young students of schools and colleges.

Calcutta, to counteract and stifle the national movements, sometimes interdicting the students of schools and colleges from joining political demonstrations, and sometimes penalizing the shouting of "Bande Mataram", a salutation to the Motherland. And, above all, he took the Bengali people by storm, at a Convocation of the University of Calcutta (February 11th, 1905), by a sweeping indictment of their love for vile flattery and disregard for truth. In proceeding to elaborate his proposition, Lord Curzon laid considerable emphasis on the fact that the highest ideal of truth was to a large extent a western conception, and that the easterners more often than not paid vicarious homage to truth through tortuous and diplomatic ways. In the course of this sanctimonious homily to the students of the University of Calcutta, Lord Curzon said :

"Untruthfulness consists in saying or doing anything that gives an erroneous impression either of one's own character, or of other people's conduct or of the facts and incidents of life.' . . . I hope I am making no false or arrogant claim when I say that the highest ideal of truth is to a large extent a western conception. I do not thereby mean to claim that Europeans are universally or even

<sup>1</sup> Two days after this statement was made at the University Convocation, *The Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta turned the tables completely against the viceroy by publishing the following extract from Lord Curzon's *Problems of the Far East* :

"Before proceeding to the royal audience I enjoyed an interview with the President of the Korean Foreign Office. . . . I remember some of his questions and answers. Having been particularly warned not to admit to him that I was only thirty-three years old, an age to which no respect attaches in Korea, when he put to me the straight question (invariably the first in an oriental dialogue), 'How old are you?' I unhesitatingly responded 'Forty'. 'Dear me,' he said, 'you look very young for that. How do you account for it?' 'By the fact' I replied, 'that I have been travelling for a month in the superb climate of His Majesty's dominions.' Finally he said to me, 'I presume you are a near relative of Her Majesty the Queen of England'. 'No' I replied, 'I am not'. But observing the look of disgust that passed over his countenance, I was fain to add, 'I am, however, as yet an unmarried man', with which unscrupulous suggestion I completely regained the old gentleman's favour!"

It must be added that this latter passage, containing the interview of Lord Curzon with the President of the Korean Foreign Office, has been discreetly omitted from the later editions of *Problems of the Far East*.

generally truthful, still less do I mean that Asiatics deliberately or habitually deviate from the truth. The one proposition would be absurd, and the other insulting. But undoubtedly truth took a high place in the moral codes of the West before it had been similarly honoured in the East, where craftiness and diplomatic skill have always been held in much repute. We may prove it by the common innuendo that lurks in the words 'oriental diplomacy' by which is meant something rather tortuous and hyper-subtle. The same may be seen in oriental literature. In your epics, truth will often be extolled as a virtue, but quite as often it is attended with some qualification, and very often praise is given to successful deception practised with honest aim. . . .

"There is a thing which we call in English 'a mare's-nest', by which we mean a pure figment of the imagination and something so preposterous as to be unthinkable. Yet there is no country where 'mare's-nests' are more prolific than here. Some ridiculous concoction is publicly believed until it is officially denied. Very often a whole fabric of hypothesis is built out of nothing at all. Worthy people are extolled as heroes. Political opponents are branded as malefactors. Immoderate adjectives are flung about as though they had no significance. The writer no doubt did not mean to lie. But the habit of exaggeration has laid such firm hold of him that he is like a man who has taken too much drink and who sees two things where there is only one or something where there is nothing."

It is difficult to measure accurately after such a lapse of time the feeling of bitterness and disgust which these vice-regal pronouncements provoked in the Indian mind; and this, together with the Partition of Bengal, made Lord Curzon's administration gall and wormwood to the people.

In August, 1905, Lord Curzon put off the panoply of viceroyalty, as the result of his defeat in a bitter controversy with Lord Kitchener, then the Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Indian Forces. These two high dignitaries of the state had quarrelled over the retention of a second military

member of the Viceroy's cabinet in addition to the Commander-in-Chief. Lord Morley has summed up the effect of Lord Curzon's resignation in a beautiful passage in his *Recollections*. "A powerful Viceroy had come in the summer of 1905 into open collision with a powerful Commander-in-Chief. Dissension followed between the Viceroy and the home Government; the Viceroy resigned; and the publication of minutes and correspondence diffused a general atmosphere of heat and scandal over a scene where heat and something like political scandal were most sedulously to be avoided. These stormy transactions left a heavy surge behind them, and India watched."

In the meantime, Lord Minto was sent out by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman to succeed Lord Curzon and to calm the Indian horse which appeared to have grown restive. Lord Minto, as soon as he donned his new armour, found himself in a most unfortunate position. His predecessor had sown the wind, and he was bound to reap the whirlwind. Only a few weeks after, John Morley came into the India Office as the new Secretary of State; and he and the new Indian Viceroy found it impossible to control the situation in this country. About this time, the Lieutenant-Governor of the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam sent out batches of Gurkha troops to many important places to terrorize the people, even going to the length of breaking up the session of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Barisal by police action. A graphic account of this incident will be found in Surendra Nath Banerjea's *A Nation in Making*. Mr. Kingsford, then the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta, had a young student of fifteen, by the name of Susil Sen, flogged at the triangle for being mixed up in a police fracas, a punishment which sent a thrill of indignation throughout the country.

But shortly afterwards a strange nemesis overtook the Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam. We give the story in Lord Morley's own words.

"The boys of certain schools at Serajgunj had been guilty of violently unruly conduct in the town, and the

Lieutenant-Governor had officially applied to the syndicate of Calcutta University to withdraw recognition from the schools. The Government of India pointed out to him that if he insisted on University taking action, result would be acrimonious public discussion in which the partition and administration of the new province would be bitterly attacked, and they thought it most desirable to avoid such a contingency, and would prefer to rely upon new university regulations to deal with political movement in the schools. For these reasons they suggested withdrawal of his request to university. The Lieutenant-Governor asked that either these orders should be reconsidered, or else that his resignation should be accepted. Lord Minto was quite alive to the objection against changing a Lieutenant-Governor in face of agitation, but it became every day more evident that the administration of the new province was unreliable and might lead to further difficulties. If we persuaded him to remain we should run the risk of having to support him against ill criticism. So the resignation was accepted. I telegraphed concurrence without delay."

The acceptance of the resignation of Sir Bamfylde Fuller was interpreted as the beginning of the end of the reign of terror, and gave a great momentum both to the constitutional national movement and to the revolutionary activities of the new schools at Manicktolla and Dacca.

The third stage was reached when the revolutionary mentality incited some youths to translate their feverish anxiety for retaliation and freedom into overt acts of sedition and treason. A section of Bengali young men attempted to reply to this reign of terror by the free use of bombs and revolvers. A large number of anusilan samities (gymnasiums) were established all over Bengal with headquarters at Calcutta and Dacca, under the leadership of Mr. Pulin Behari Das and Mr. P. Mitter, for the development of courage and physical culture. The worship of Shivaji and Bhawani,<sup>1</sup> previously unknown in Bengal, became the order of the day,

<sup>1</sup> Bhawani, another name for Kali (the goddess of Energy, Force and Strength), was the principal deity of the Mahratta people in Shivaji's time.

and Mrs. Sarala Devi instituted the annual demonstration of sword play, wrestling and jujitsu on the Birastami day, the second day of Durga Pujah.<sup>1</sup> Batches of young men began to train themselves on the teachings of the *Gita* which inculcated the doctrine that life was a mission, and death a *maya* (illusion) which contained no terror and meant only a change of the physical body. Within a very short time the Song of the Lord<sup>2</sup> became the most sacred gospel and the principal text of the Revivalists. The Revivalist doctrine, under the inspiration of Aurobindo Ghose, acquired such a momentum among the youth of Bengal that within two or three years it formed the basis of a revolutionary party in the province.

These new teachings and activities led one class of people to take its courage in both hands and preach sedition both in the Press and on the platform, and another class to practise the use of the bomb and the revolver. In the course of a few months some of the leaders of both these movements were arrested and tried for sedition and treason. And in the meantime, the Government had passed a new act to proclaim and suppress "seditious meetings", and Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were deported under the Bengal Regulation. It is interesting to recollect that this Regulation, described by Morley as an old and rusty weapon in the armoury of the Government, was restored by Lord Elgin at the end of the nineteenth century. He used it to deport the Nati brothers of Poona for their suspected complicity in the murder of Rand and Ayerst, two officers drafted from the military to enforce some atrocious regulations for the suppression of plague which was raging in a virulent form in that city at that time. In the case of Lajpat Rai, the cry was different.

<sup>1</sup> The Durga Pujahs are the autumnal festival of the Bengali people in connection with the worship of Durga, the Divine mother with ten arms, and correspond very much with the Christmas festivities of Europe. The worship continues generally for four days, on the last of which the image is taken with great ceremony to a river or a pond and immersed.

<sup>2</sup> The *Bhagavad Gita* has been translated by an English writer under this title, while Arnold has rendered it into English under the name of *The Song Celestial*. This book has also been translated into English by Mrs. Besant and several other English writers. But the most scholarly and dependable translation is the one made by K. T. Telang for Max Müller's "Sacred Books of the East" series.



The Government of the time thought that in consequence of some incendiary speeches delivered by him and his friend at Rawalpindi, sanguinary riots had taken place in that city, and, in the words of Lord Morley, "I would not sanction deportation except for a man of whom there was solid reason to believe that violent disorder was the direct and deliberately planned result of his action."

In the case of Bengal, however, the Government did not use the old Regulation III at this stage, but sanctioned a number of prosecutions against its principal suspects. In most of these cases, Chitta Ranjan appeared as the counsel for the defence and made the reputation which brought him to the forefront, both in his profession, and in the public life of the country. With these cases, and Chitta Ranjan's powers of advocacy and forensic skill, I shall deal in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUCCESS AT THE BAR

THE first year of Lord Minto's viceroyalty was tense with public excitement. A section of the Bengali Press had cast off all sense of restraint, and begun to indulge in downright and unabashed license. A new Lieutenant-Governor, quite unacquainted with the genius, temperament, and conditions of the Bengali people, had been drafted from the Central Provinces to occupy the *gadi* at Belvedere and administer the affairs of the most advanced province in India. He received such a fright from the writings of this section of the Press, that he wanted the law officers of the Government to make an example of the principal offenders. The first to come under this new official campaign was the *Bande Mataram*, an English daily founded by Subodh Chandra Mallick, Chitta Ranjan Das and another friend, and edited by a committee with Aurobindo Ghose as the controlling chief.

Aurobindo Ghose, grandson of Raj Narayan Bose, previously mentioned, was sent to England for education very early in life. After studying a few years at St. Paul's School in London, he went to Cambridge, and, in due course, got a first class in the Classical Tripos.<sup>1</sup> Sitting for the Civil Service Examination in 1890, he secured a good place in the list, but, not being able to ride, he was not taken into the Service. After some years of literary work and rambling about in England, he returned to India as Vice-Principal of Baroda College. There he remained till 1906, and the beginning of the Partition agitation in Bengal, when he came to Calcutta and almost immediately joined the staff of the *Bande Mataram* which was started on August 6th, 1906. When he joined the *Bande Mataram*, he did not know a

<sup>1</sup> The only other Bengali who has so far got a first class in the Cambridge Classical Tripos was the late Harinath Dey of the Calcutta Presidency College and the Imperial Library.

word of the Bengali language, or anything about the conditions of Bengali life. Yet he did not come here as a sahib,<sup>1</sup> and he kept religiously to the spiritual standard of ancient India—"plain living and high thinking". At this stage he began to develop a scheme for a Vedantic revival. Though he has been devoting his time to the study of Indian philosophy since his retirement to Pondicherry in 1910, in 1906 and 1907 he knew very little about the Vedanta, but he found in the word itself, and in all its metaphysical connotation, a certain way of enmeshing young Bengal in the nets of an intensive political propaganda. As the *de facto* editor of the *Bande Mataram*, he found the columns of the paper a good medium for the propagation of his doctrine, and, under the inspiring heading of "The New Path", he frequently descanted on revolution as the way to the promised land. This campaign soon became obvious, and Sir Andrew Fraser's government was ill-advised to try and stem the tide by prosecuting the editor when the propaganda had had a very good start. Unfortunately for the Government, the prosecution failed, as no editorial responsibility of the paper could be fixed by the prosecution on any person, for, in those days, no newspaper was required by law to declare the name of its editor, and no witness was found to attest to the editor's name. While Aurobindo escaped without punishment, his printer was convicted and sentenced to three months' imprisonment. With the failure of this prosecution, Aurobindo Ghose and his counsel, Chitta Ranjan, came prominently before the public, and from the point of view of propaganda the Government's object was completely defeated.

Brahmobandhab Upadhyaya, as editor of *Sandhya*, and Bhupendra Nath Dutt, as editor of *Yugantar*, were also prosecuted about this time for sedition. Brahmobandhab, who hailed from a Christian family and himself was a convert to Christianity, constituted himself at this time the most eloquent and forcible advocate of the Hindu revival and of the anti-Government spirit. Bhupendra Nath Dutt, brother of Swami Vivekananda, gathered round him a

<sup>1</sup> In the trappings of a Westerner.

galaxy of brilliant writers, including Barindra Kumar Ghose, younger brother of Aurobindo Ghose, and carried the standard of revolution to the very heart of young Bengal. Both Brahmobandhab and Bhupendra Nath Dutt wrote excellent Bengali, and clothed their ideas in most appealing language. When they were prosecuted, they both were given the advertisement of their lives, and Chitta Ranjan, as the counsel for their defence, took the public by storm by his brilliant powers of advocacy. In both these cases, Chitta Ranjan appeared before the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta, and took up a line of defence which startled the Magistrate as well as the public outside. On the instructions of his client, Brahmobandhab, he entered into no defence at all, as his client would have nothing to do with a British Court of Justice. In a written statement, Brahmobandhab said : " I do not want to take part in the trial, because I do not believe that, in carrying out my humble share of the God-appointed mission of Swaraj, I am in any way accountable to the alien people, who happen to rule over us and whose interest is, and must necessarily be, in the way of our true national development." But the case took an unexpected turn when the accused died in the Campbell Hospital in Calcutta before the preliminary stages had been concluded. In the case of Bhupendra Nath Dutt, Chitta Ranjan tried to defend him on the ground that the words and ideas for which he was being prosecuted bore quite a different interpretation from that which the prosecution had put upon it. The defence failed and his client was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment, but all the same, his abilities as an advocate evoked general admiration.

In April, 1908, the effects of the open preaching of sedition came to the surface. On the 30th of the month, Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki, two young boys belonging to the Revolutionary Party of Manicktolla, threw a bomb at a carriage at Muzzaferpore, which they thought belonged to Mr. Kingsford, the District Judge. They meant to take Mr. Kingsford's life as a measure of retaliation for the severe punishment which in the previous year he had, as the chief

Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta, imposed on some editors of newspapers, and for having a young boy by the name of Susil Sen flogged at the triangle.<sup>1</sup> But unfortunately for the two assailants the carriage was not Mr. Kingsford's and the bomb, instead of killing him, killed the wife and daughter of a much respected and pro-Indian European, Mr. Pringle Kennedy. When the news of this atrocious crime was flashed to Calcutta, the police became most active, and, in the course of a few hours, they were able to trace the source of the crime.

It was discovered that at 32, Muraripukur Road, in Manicktolla, a suburb of Calcutta, a bomb-factory had been established by some young Bengalis to paralyse the Government by "direct action". On the 2nd day of May, Barindra Kumar Ghose, the chief brain of the organization, and some of his associates, were rounded up by the Calcutta police, and, within the next few days, more arrests were made, including that of Aurobindo Ghose, at 48, Grey Street. Altogether thirty-six young men were arrested on suspicion of a complicity with the crime at Muzzaferpore and the bomb factory at Manicktolla, and some of these made admissions which proved very startling to an unsuspecting public. They were sent up for trial under Sections 120, 121, 122 and 123 of the Indian Penal Code, which relate to waging war against the King, and to forming a conspiracy with the same object. The trial commenced before the Magistrate of Alipur on the 19th of May, and was heard by Mr. Beachcroft with two assessors, who sent it up to the Court of Session. During the first stage of this case in the Session Court, which commenced in October, 1908, Mr. Eardley Norton appeared for the Crown and a leading Indian barrister for the defence for a few days only. On their inability to pay this Indian barrister the accused had to find a new counsel. The solicitors for the defence, Messrs. Manuel and Agarwalla, approached

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Lord Minto, Lord Morley had anticipated the consequences of atrocious punishments. "I must confess to you that I am watching with the deepest concern and dismay the thundering sentences that are now being passed for sedition, etc. We must keep order, but excess of severity is not the path to order. On the contrary, it is the path to the bomb."

Chitta Ranjan, with the permission and advice of Aurobindo, to appear on his behalf, and Chitta Ranjan accepted Aurobindo's brief with great enthusiasm and unlike the "legalized freebooters"<sup>1</sup> of his day, worked incessantly for over six months for practically no fees. This brief gave Chitta Ranjan Das the opportunity of his life for the display of his forensic skill and powers of cross-examination. In this case 206 witnesses were examined, 4,000 documents were filed, and the exhibits, consisting of bombs, revolvers, ammunition, detonators, fuses, poisonous acids, and other explosive materials, numbered 500.

Aurobindo Ghose was charged along with his brother Barindra Kuma Ghose and others with (a) waging war against the King (Sec. 120 I.P.C.), (b) with conspiracy to wage war against the King (Sec. 12 I.P.C.), and (c) collecting arms, etc., for the same object.

The evidence against Aurobindo was of the usual kind, consisting of his letters, writings, speeches, etc., and other facts tending to show incitement to violence and connection with other conspirators. The prosecution attempted to show from his letters to his wife and from his private correspondence in general, that Aurobindo was aware of, and implicated in, a conspiracy to wage war against the King.

From his writings and speeches, it was attempted to show that he had preached complete and absolute independence for India as the political ideal of young men, and this was done with a view to help and further the end the conspirators had before them. Turning to Aurobindo Ghose's writings and public utterances, Chitta Ranjan Das argued that his client was an extremely religious man, and his political views were moulded by his religious ideas, which, in their turn, were based on Vedantism. He said :

"So far as the nation was concerned, he (Aurobindo) preached that lofty ideal of freedom. So far as the individual was concerned, his idea always was to go there himself and look for the Godhead within. It is a familiar ideal of our

<sup>1</sup> This was a phrase coined by the late Bhupendra Nath Basu to describe the barristers and advocates of Calcutta of his day.

country. It is difficult for those not familiar with it to understand it.

“ The doctrine of Vedantism is that man is not dissociated from God : that is to say, if you want to realize yourself you must look for the God within you. It is within your heart and within your soul that you will find that God dwells, and as no man can attain to his own salvation without reaching to that God that is within you ; so also in the case of nations : without any national question arising—no nation can attain this unless it realizes the highest and noblest and the best of that nation. As in the case of individuals you cannot reach your God with extraneous aid, but you must make an effort—that supreme effort—yourself before you can realize the God within you ; so also with a nation. It is by itself that a nation must grow ; a nation must attain its salvation by its unaided effort. No foreigner can give you that salvation. It is within your own hands to revive that spirit of nationality. That is the doctrine of nationality which Aurobindo has preached throughout and that was to be done, not by methods which are against the traditions of the country. I ask your particular attention to that. It was not Aurobindo's philosophy that salvation was to be attained by methods inconsistent with the whole history and traditions of the writer, and therefore, when you find Aurobindo leaving Baroda and coming to Calcutta you find that the doctrines he preaches are not doctrines of violence but doctrines of passive resistance. It is not bombs, but suffering. He deprecates secret societies and violence and enjoins them to suffer. If there is a law which is unjust and offensive against the development of the nation, break that law by all means and take the consequences. He never asked you to apply force in a single utterance of his either in the Press or on the platform. If the Government thought fit to bring in a law which hinders you from attaining that salvation, Aurobindo's advice is to break that law if necessary in the sense of not obeying it. You owe it to your conscience ; you owe it to your God. If the law says you must go to jail, go to jail. That was the cardinal feature of the doctrine of

passive resistance which Aurobindo preached. Is not the doctrine of passive resistance preached throughout the world on the same footing? Is it peculiar to this country—this movement which has met with such abusive language from Mr. Norton? Have not the people of England done it over and over again? I say that this is the same doctrine that Aurobindo was preaching almost up to the very day when those handcuffs were put on his hands. He was oppressed with a feeling of disappointment, because his country was losing everything, having lost their faith. Therefore, you find, whenever he preached freedom, he brought out that feature clearly. He says, believe in yourself; no one attains salvation who does not believe in himself. Similarly, he says, in the case of the nation. If the nation does not feel that it has got something within it to be free to attain that salvation then there is no hope for that nation. Accordingly we find Aurobindo preaching 'you are not cowards, you are not a set of incapable men, because you have got divinity. Have faith in you and in that faith go towards that goal and become a self-developed nation.'"

Turning to the rest of the evidence, consisting mostly of private correspondence, Chitta Ranjan Das showed successfully that "if you presume Aurobindo Ghose to be a conspirator, there are passages in the letters which may be regarded as evidence of his guilt. But if you start with no such presumption, but make the presumption of innocence, which the law enjoins you to make, these passages are capable of innocent explanations in the light of his religious views."

The most incriminating pieces of evidence under this head was what was known as the "sweets" letter which ran as follows :

Dear Brother,

Now is the time, please try and make them meet for our conference. We must have sweets all over India ready made for imergencies, I wait here for your answer.

Your affectionate,  
Barindra Kumar Ghose.



The prosecution argued that "sweets" meant bombs—a supposition not unlikely in itself in view of other evidence in the case. The extremists having succeeded in breaking up the Congress at Surat, Barin thought that the great moment had arrived when they could launch out upon a programme of direct action. He, therefore, wanted the free distribution of sweets (bombs) all over the country. Chitta Ranjan argued that the letter was a forgery—as clumsy as those Piggott had got up to incriminate Parnell after the murder of Lord Cavendish in Phoenix Park in Dublin. He proceeded to point out that no younger brother in Bengal would sign his name in full while writing to his elder brother; and, according to the custom of his people, Barin should have addressed Aurobindo as "Mejda", and not as "My dear Brother", as is the English way. Apart from this palpable evidence of forgery, the spelling of the word "imergencies" by such a clever man as Barin, who had received a good English education, left no doubt as to the origin and authorship of the letter. In addition to the internal evidence of forgery, by adroit and skilful cross-examination of police witnesses, Chitta Ranjan made it appear almost probable that this letter was not discovered at the time of the search, but was a subsequent interpolation by the police.

Chitta Ranjan concluded his defence with the following eloquent words :

"The evidence as is furnished by the confession in this court—confessions, upon which the prosecution relies—you will find that it is childish conspiracy—a toy revolution. It is impossible that Aurobindo could ever believe in his heart of hearts that, by bombing one or two Englishmen or some Englishmen at different places, they could ever have been able to subvert the British Government. If you credit him with intellectual powers and say that he was a brilliant mind, it is open to you at the same time to say that he was the leader of a childish conspiracy and a toy revolution."

"Either drop the suggestion that it is because of the intellectual powers, because of the brilliant qualities with which he is credited, that you want the court to believe that

he was the leader of this conspiracy ; or the other theory that he was in fact the leader of the conspiracy and of this alleged revolutionary project.

“ If the Government has taken into its head to believe that there is a vast conspiracy which is threatening the stability of the Government, it is common knowledge that you do come across spies who give false evidence. I shall just read a passage from a book written by an eminent judge : ‘ The Government under these circumstances have spies who wriggle into the case, eavesdrop into families, abstract correspondence and false letters ’. Therefore the evidence given before you is evidence that you can expect in a case like this.

“ My appeal to you, therefore, is that a man like this, who is being charged with the offence with which he has been charged, stands not only before the bar in this Court, but stands before the bar of the High Court of History. My appeal to you is this, that long after the controversy will be hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, the agitation will have ceased, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism ; as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone, his words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India, but across distant seas and lands. Therefore, I say, that the man in his position is not only standing before the bar of this court, but before the bar of the High Court of History.

“ The time has come for you, Sir, to consider your judgement, and for you, gentlemen (addressing the Assessors) to consider your verdict. I appeal to you, Sir, in the name of all the traditions of the English bench that forms the most glorious chapter of English history. I appeal to you in the name of all that is noble, of all the thousand principles of law which have emanated from the English Bench, and I appeal to you in the name of the distinguished judges who have administered the law in such a manner as to compel not only obedience, but the respect of all those in whose cases they have administered the law. I appeal to you in the name of the glorious chapter of English history, and let it not be said

that an English judge forgets to vindicate justice. To you, gentlemen, I appeal in the name of the very ideal that Aurobindo preached, and in the name of all the traditions of our country; and let it not be said that two of his own countrymen (referring to the Assessors) were overcome by passion and prejudice and yielded to the clamour of the moment."

Mr. Beachcroft, who was at Cambridge with Aurobindo and passed into the Indian Civil Service the same year, was impressed with Chitta Ranjan's impassioned plea for his client and acquitted Aurobindo Ghose<sup>1</sup> of the charge with which he was accused by the police, and paid Chitta Ranjan very high compliments for his able and skilful advocacy. This case at once established the reputation of Chitta Ranjan as one of the foremost lawyers of his day, and from this time forward, he had no more any occasion to seek briefs, and solicitors came trooping into his chambers with them, most of which he was compelled to refuse either for want of time or unwillingness to take up more work than he could conveniently handle.

When Chitta Ranjan became a busy lawyer, he had of course to abandon his devotion to literature and journalism, yet he managed during this time (1913-15) to publish two books of poems and edited a vernacular monthly review, principally devoted to researches in Vaishnavic literature. But the money that he earned with both hands at this time, he gave away in open-handed charity to all and sundry. He maintained with extraordinary munificence a nursing home organized by one of his sisters at Purulia, where both his parents had retired in their last years and died. No one who came to him to beg either from personal difficulty, or on behalf of any public institution—no matter whether it was a school, college, library, dispensary

<sup>1</sup> Of the other accused in the Alipore Bomb Case, Barindra Kumar Ghose (Aurobindo's brother) and Ullaskar Dutt were sentenced to be hanged. Hem Chandra Das and Upendra Nath Bandopadhyaya along with some others were transported for life. Chitta Ranjan conducted the case in the High Court also when it came before it on appeal. The sentences on Barindra and Ullaskar were reduced to those of transportation. Some of the other accused had also their sentences reduced, and two were acquitted.

or the foundation of a temple, or the excavation of a tank—went away disappointed from his doors. His hospitality was also unbounded, and he was accessible to all, at all times. Even at the height of his practice, and with all the financial difficulties that had overtaken him in 1906, he had not acquired any love for money. And there have been several political cases, particularly the Dacca Conspiracy Case of 1911, in which he accepted the brief for the defence without adequate remuneration.

In 1913, when he had risen almost to the top of his profession, he took the rather unusual procedure of paying his and his father's joint debts, for which they had both gone together to the Insolvency Court six years before. When Lord Sinha (then Mr. S. P. Sinha) applied to Mr. Justice Fletcher, of the High Court on behalf of Chitta Ranjan for the annulment of the adjudication order on the payment of all his creditor's dues, Chitta Ranjan made an impression on Bengal for honesty and probity almost unparalleled in modern times. Mr. Justice Fletcher observed from the Bench that the application was a very proper one, and Mr. Sinha remarked it was not very often done.

After he had become a discharged insolvent, he used to spend the long vacation of the High Court (September to November) almost every other year in England and in these visits he acquired a special love for International Law, arts, letters, and music.

Chitta Ranjan's practice till now was confined principally to criminal cases, but in 1914 he received a brief in a civil case at Arrah (in Bihar) where he displayed the same powers of analysis and hard work that he had displayed in the great Manicktolla Bomb Trial. He practically picked up a beggar from the street and placed him on the *gadi* of Dumraon, getting the claims of an unknown and neglected reversioner of the estate recognized both by the Lower Court at Arrah and by the High Court of Patna. As the Dumraon estate is one of the largest personal properties in northern India, and as Chitta Ranjan had not a very strong brief, his success in this case finally established his place as a great civil lawyer

also, and Rajas and Maharajas all over the country wanted their solicitors to brief him in all their cases.

In 1917, 1918 and 1919, he told me at Darjeeling a few days before his death, his professional income amounted to nearly three lakhs of rupees a year, and in 1920, he was earning Rs. 50,000 (£4,000) every month. When he had attained this position at the Bar, Mr. Gandhi's appeal for non-co-operation gripped him, and in January of the following year induced him to renounce his practice for good and withdraw from all the temptations and lures of his profession.

The secret of Chitta Ranjan's success in the Bar, both in civil as well as in criminal practice, was hard work. It is stated that during the protracted trial of Aurobindo Ghose at Alipore, there was hardly any day when he could retire to bed before the small hours of the morning. He did not accept many briefs at any time of his life, but when he took one up, he was almost obsessed with it. Night and day he would toil over it, and, in his sleeping and waking hours, he would give himself no rest or peace until he could find out the points in his favour and the manner in which he could hammer them out. He would study with punctilious care all the case law on every aspect of his brief, and would work juniors or devils to death to find out for him all that might be urged from the opposite side of the case. Once he had found out the points to fight over, he was almost invincible. To hard work he added the rare qualification of a wonderful power of cross-examination, and there was seldom any person brought against his side whom he did not reduce to pulp in the witness box. To crown all he put his case wonderfully well, in very eloquent language, and with excellent address. One Bengali counsel<sup>1</sup> who had worked as his junior in many cases has given to the world the following impression of his leader.

"Some fundamental qualities underlay his advocacy. He possessed an iron strength and never yielded an inch of ground either to judge or to adversary; and combined with it a driving power of argument before which even hostile

<sup>1</sup> Mr. B. C. Chatterji in *Forward*.

judges faltered, and ultimately fell. There was not the least trace of sycophancy in his pleading, nor the faintest of tremors at the knees in the presence of authority. He stood and spoke like a man to a fellow-man, but gave off all the time that unconscious magnetism which generally over-powered judge and audience. The most noteworthy feature of his advocacy was that its quality impressed in proportion to the difficulty of its subject matter."

## CHAPTER VII

### A BLACK DECENNIUM

(1908—1917)

"If errors have occurred, the agents of my Government have spared no pains and no self-sacrifice to correct them; if abuses have been proved, vigorous hands have laboured to apply a remedy." In a short but very expressive review of fifty years' government of India under the British Crown, Lord Morley, as Secretary of State for India, put the above words in the mouth of the Sovereign, Edward VII, in a Proclamation dated November 2nd, 1908.<sup>1</sup>

It is curious that while Lord Morley looked on the leading events of this period in India with a "clear gaze and a good conscience" it escaped his otherwise observant eyes that the people of India for their part had quite a different opinion about what the administration had done. In a previous chapter we saw how viceroy after viceroy blundered during these fifty years, how Indian sentiment was flouted and British interests maintained at the point of the bayonet. But apart from the historical inaccuracy and distorted judgement which an Indian finds in Lord Morley's retrospect, what is more irritating is the repetition of the pious formula that "divine protection and favour" will "strengthen the wisdom and mutual goodwill that are needed for the achievement of a task as glorious as was ever committed to rulers and subjects in any state or empire of recorded time".

In this chapter we shall see how this pious wish was repudiated at every turn from the year of the Proclamation almost down to the end of the war in 1918. That decade India found very black indeed, crowded with acts of repression and disappointments unparalleled even in the annals of our conquered race.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B.

Lord Minto instead of quelling the storm raised by the Anglo-Indian capitalists and merchants of Clive Street, fell a victim to their concerted effort to strangle the new-born consciousness of the Indian people, and John Morley, who had then been two years at the India Office, and was now at his own desire a peer, found himself compelled to agree to every proposal for repression emanating from Calcutta and Simla. As a result of their co-operation a number of penal and repressive laws were added to the Statute Book, while all the time high-sounding principles of democratic philosophy were being enunciated at the other end of the cable.

On June 8th, nearly six weeks after the Muzzaferpore outrage, under the guidance of Lord Minto, and certainly with the sanction of Lord Morley, the Newspapers Act, putting a new gag on the Press, and the Explosives Act, penalizing the handling of explosive substances, were passed in the Indian Legislative Council. In October, the Bengal Government issued a resolution extending the order of the Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta and of the District Magistrate of the 24-Parganas (Alipur) prohibiting the holding of any public meeting in any place under their jurisdiction for a further period of six months.

On December 11th, a special Crimes Act for the summary trials of political prisoners, and proscribing certain associations and organizations, was passed into law at a single sitting of the Indian Legislative Council. While all repressive measures had a very easy passage in the Council, one recalls with no little surprise and wonder that Mr. Gokhale's Elementary Education Bill, the first attempt to introduce a system of free and compulsory system of education in India, was thrown out by the combined official and nominated *bloc* of the Council.

Nor was there any end to executive high-handedness and police oppression in both Eastern and Western Bengal and in other parts of India. About the end of 1906, Lord Minto, with the consent of Lord Morley, again used the old and rusty weapon (Bengal Regulation III. of 1818), and by virtue of the



powers invested by it in the Governor-General, sent into deportation nine of the principal leaders of the new nationalist and swadeshi movement. First, Babu Krishna Kumar Mitter, the editor of the vernacular newspaper the *Sanjibani*, and two others were arrested, and deported to an unknown destination. Two days later, Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt, the leader of Barisal, and six other prominent leaders of the boycott and physical culture movement were similarly arrested and deported. In the beginning of the new year (1909) several *samitis* (*gymnasiums*) in Eastern Bengal were proclaimed under the new Crimes Act. For some reason or other, Lord Minto spared Surendra Nath Banerjea and Bhupendra Nath Bose, who were the real leaders of the nationalist movement of those days. Lord Morley has pathetically described his feelings about this matter of deportation in a letter written to the viceroy of the time, and subsequently reproduced in the second volume of his *Recollections*. We read :

“ January 27th.—This brings me to Deportees. The question between us two upon this matter may, if we don't take care, become what the Americans call ugly. I won't repeat the general arguments about Deportation. I have fought against those here who regarded such a resort to the Regulation of 1818 as indefensible. So, per contra, I am ready just as stoutly to fight those who wish to make this arbitrary detention for indefinite periods a regular weapon of Government. Now your present position is beginning to approach this. You have nine men locked up a year ago by *lettre de cachet*, because you believed them to be criminally connected with criminal plots, and because you expected their effect to check these plots. For a certain time it looked as if the *coup* were effective, and were justified by the result. In all this, I think, we were perfectly right. Then you come by and by upon what you regard as a great anarchist conspiracy for sedition and murder, and you warn me that you may soon apply to me for sanction of further arbitrary arrest and detention on a large scale. I ask whether this process implies that through the nine *détenus* you have found out a

murder-plot contrived, not by them, but by other people. You say, ' We admit that being locked up they can have had no share in these new abominations ; but their continued detention will frighten evil-doers generally'. That's the Russian argument ; by packing off train-loads of suspects to Siberia, we'll terrify the anarchists out of their wits, and all will come out right. That policy did not work out brilliantly in Russia, and did not save the lives of the Trepoffs, nor did it save Russia from a Duma, the very thing that the Trepoffs and the rest of the ' offs ' ' deprecated and detested.' "

This new use of an old and unrepealed Bengal Regulation sent the entire country into wild fury, and the agitation over this matter went so far that Gopal Krishna Gokhale, perhaps the outstanding personality in Indian politics of that time, speaking at a Reform Club meeting in London, was obliged to appeal to the governing classes of the United Kingdom for the annulment of Lord Curzon's blunder. Though " honest " John saw the errors of his ways, he refused to budge or bend over the Bengal Partition, and from his place in the House of Commons as well as in the Lords, he time and again described the Partition as " settled " and " sacrosanct ".

The Government became so panicky at this time that they began to leave no stone unturned to suppress the nascent spirit of unrest in Bengal. Between criminal prosecutions for sedition, vexatious espionage, the operation of drastic legislation and deportations and internment, the governments of Sir Edward Baker (Bengal, Bihar and Orissa), and Sir Bamfylde Fuller (Eastern Bengal and Assam), tried every weapon in their armoury to suppress seditious thought and revolutionary activity in Bengal. But their attempts in this direction did not end there, nor were they crowned with the success that was expected of them. A novel course was, therefore, discovered to check the growing spirit of independence among the student community in these provinces. It was realized by the Secretariat in Calcutta and Dacca that at the bottom of the new spirit of Bengal was the very careful study of the history of England by young men in their teens ; and, under pressure of the official *bloc*, a new curriculum was

devised for the next Matriculation Examination in which the study of English history was tabooed. This did not prevent young Bengalis from knowing anything about Magna Carta or the Bill of Rights, or about the fight between Parliament and the Sovereign under the Stuart Kings of England, or about Hampden or Cromwell or Charles I. Young Bengal began to dip more closely into the pages of English and European history, with the result that the entire static atmosphere of an old Indian province was galvanized in a few short months with new dynamic ideas.

Young Bengal ceased at this time to worship at the old tabernacles and withdrew its homage from the recognized leaders and tribunes of the people. The new mentality of the younger generation found a most eloquent expression when nearly fifty thousand of them lined the streets of Kalighat to take the dust of the feet of the dead bodies of Kanai Lal Dutt and Satyendra Nath Bose as they were carried from the Central Jail of Calcutta to the cremation ground of Keoratala. These two men had been hanged that morning for the assassination of a police informer<sup>1</sup> within the compound of the same jail.

The funeral demonstration of these two political assassins proved such a staggering revelation to the Government that from that day forward, the cremation of political assassins outside the jail compound was no longer permitted. But whatever steps the Government were advised to take at this period for the suppression of the new seditious movement, there cannot be any manner of doubt as to the fact that the bulk of the student community in Calcutta and outside had got out of hand and could not be controlled either through university regulations or police operations.

At this time also, the collaboration between the Indian

<sup>1</sup> Narendra Nath Gossain, a member of the Revolutionary Party<sup>\*</sup> at Manicktolla, gave to the police all the clues necessary for the rounding up of his fellow conspirators on the very evening when Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose tried to kill Mr. Kingsford at Muzzaferpore.<sup>\*</sup> This man was living in the same jail with Kanai Lal Dutt and Satyendra Nath Bose until on August 31st, 1908, he was shot dead with a revolver within the jail compound by these two young men. How and where they found this revolver remains up to this day an unexplained mystery.

Viceroy and the Indian Secretary of State on a new scheme of reforms was nearing completion, and Lord Morley had prepared himself to put their joint ideas on the matter to the test of Parliament. But before this Bill had been shaped for introduction in Parliament, Lord Morley had taken courage to appoint an Indian Member to the Viceroy's cabinet. It must be mentioned here that he undertook the responsibility of this appointment against tremendous odds. The Viceroy's Council opposed the idea ; so also did the Council of India at Whitehall. Lord Kitchener offered a vehement opposition to the proposal ; and ex-viceroy's like Lansdowne, Elgin and Curzon swelled the chorus of disapproval. It is distressing to note that even such a friendly and sympathetic statesman as Lord Ripon refused to give his blessings to Morley's idea, and, on top of all this opposition, came Edward VII's remonstrance in the matter. It appears that the only reason for opposing this appointment was the conviction at the back of every white man's mind that no native of India could be trusted with all the secrets, both civil and military, which came before the Viceroy's cabinet for joint consultation and decision. But Lord Morley had set his mind on the matter, and nothing would shake his decision. He circumvented and outmanœuvred all opposition, and, taking the power invested in him by statute, appointed Mr. Sâtyendra Prasanna Sinha, then a leading barrister of the Calcutta High Court, to the position of Law Member of the Government of India. It must be admitted that this was a far-reaching move, and opened all positions of honour and dignity in the state to Indians of ability and integrity, giving effect after long delay to the high principles enunciated in the Charter Act of 1833, and in Queen Victoria's proclamation of 1858, and paving the way for the constitutional move taken by Mr. Montagu ten years later. Only two years previously, Lord Morley had widened the door of the Council of India at Whitehall, to admit two Indian gentlemen as members, Krishna Govinda Gupta and Syed Hossain Bilgrammi, an event which had created almost as great a furore throughout Anglo-India as the appointment of Sinha to the Viceroy's cabinet.

The India Councils Act Amendment Bill of Lord Morley was introduced in the House of Lords in February, 1909, and passed through both Houses without much difficulty before Parliament rose for the Easter recess, though all the ex-viceroy of India then alive, and ex-Secretaries of State like Fowler and Brodrick, were opposed to his new scheme of Reforms. With the main purport and provisions of this Bill, I shall deal in the chapter on Constitutional Development.

Perhaps as the price which Lord Minto demanded for his assent to Morley's Reforms, the Secretary of State sanctioned a special Press Law drafted by the Government of India to make an example of seditious writers and to make such writing expensive. It seems curious that while according his sanction to the new Press Bill, he wrote a very strong letter to Lord Minto against the wisdom of such a measure. Morley wrote to Lord Minto under date February 3rd, 1910.

"We worked hard at your Press Act, and I hope the result has reached you in plenty of time. I daresay it is as sensible in its way as other Press Acts, or as Press Acts can ever be. But nobody will be more ready than you to agree that the forces with which we are contending are far too subtle, deep, and diversified, to be abated by making seditious leading articles expensive. There are important sentences in your official telegram that show how much of the poison is entirely out of our reach. The 'veiled innuendo' of which you speak—the talk about Mazzini, Kossuth, etc.—it is seditious no doubt, and it may point to assassination plainly enough in the minds of excitable readers. But a Lt.-Governor will have to walk warily before putting too strong an interpretation upon the theoretic plausibilities of the newspaper scribe. Neither I nor my Council would have sanctioned it, if there had been no appeal in some due form to a court of law, and you tell me that you would have had sharp difficulties in your own Council."

Sir Herbert Risley, then the Home Member of the Government of India, had drafted this Bill in conformity with an Austrian law on the subject, and made it as drastic as possible under the circumstances. When this measure was

introduced in the Indian Legislative Council, a tremendous agitation was set on foot against it by the entire Press of the country, and Lord Sinha, then the Law Member of the Government of India, refused to pilot the Bill through, and informed the Viceroy that if certain provisions of the Bill were not radically amended, he would have nothing to do with it and would resign his office. Perhaps this strong attitude of Sinha is referred to by Lord Morley as "the sharp difficulties" in the Viceroy's Council. Even amended with the provision of an appeal to the High Court, the Bill had all the sting of outrageously repressive legislation, and one recalls with a little surprise that only two members of the Imperial Council were found to offer a stout and wholesale opposition against the passage of this Bill through the Council—Bhupendra Nath Basu and Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya. People were surprised to find even Gopal Krishna Gokhale giving his qualified support to this measure.

While the draconian provisions of the Press Act revealed the political mentality of the Government of India of the time, Lord Minto prevailed upon Lord Morley to accept a scheme of special communal representation to which he had given his blessing in 1906, in response to a desire expressed by a Mahomedan deputation inspired and arranged by an official clique at Simla. It is a pity that the leaders of the Mahomedan community of the time overlooked the very important fact that greater patronage to their community meant a wider cleavage between them and the Hindus, and an additional reason why Government should continue the old game of *divide et impera*. The game started by Lord Minto, as the head of the Government at Simla, was a sinister one, and its effects have gone so deep that the communal spirit in Simla now stands as the greatest bar to the development and fruition of a spirit of homogeneous nationhood.

It is perhaps not generally known that when Lord Minto's viceroyalty was coming to an end, a very influential movement was set on foot in England to get Lord Kitchener appointed as his successor. This idea was approved of by the King-Emperor also, but Lord Morley proved strong enough not to

set up a military dictatorship in India particularly at the time of a great national upheaval.

In October, 1910, Lord Minto, and in November of the same year, Lord Morley, resigned their offices. It is an irony of fate that the term of office of perhaps the most honest politician of the England of his day, and of so God-fearing a viceroy as Lord Minto, proved to be a very black period in modern Indian history. It is still more unfortunate that this happened, not when they were pulling against each other, but, as Lord Morley himself has stated, "when both of them tried to understand India in the same way and look at their business in the same spirit". Honest intentions perhaps have no place in the governance of a modern state. How curious that Lord Morley in a letter to Lord Minto, had anticipated the verdict of history on their joint labours in the government of India. He wrote : "It will be insupportable if you, who are a sound Whig, and I, who am an 'autoritaire' Radical (so they say) (?) go down to our graves (I first) as imitators of Eldon, Sidmouth, the Six Acts, and all the other men and policies which we were both of us brought up to abhor."

They were succeeded by Lord Hardinge and Lord Crewe as Viceroy and Secretary of State respectively. Between them, these two were secretly devising some measure to unsettle the Bengal Partition and wriggle out of the situation which Lord Curzon in a thoughtless moment had created. People knew scarcely anything about these negotiations, and could hardly suspect that the authorities were going to acknowledge the blunder after so many years and undo its effect. In the meantime, King Edward VII died, and George V came to India for his Coronation.

At the special Durbar held on December 12th, 1911, where the King was crowned Emperor of India, the annulment of the Partition of Bengal was announced through the lips of the Sovereign. The official scheme of this announcement involved according to Lord Hardinge's Government, two equally momentous changes. Assam was taken out of Bengal and reconverted into an independent province, with a Chief

Commissioner at its head. The districts of Eastern and Western Bengal were amalgamated and placed under one Governor and Executive Council. The districts of Bihar and Orissa, with Sambalpur and Chotā Nagpur thrown in, were taken out of the old Lieutenant-Governorship of Bengal and placed under a Governor and a Council with the title of Bihar and Orissa ; Calcutta retained its position as the capital of the diminished province of Bengal, but lost its dignity as the capital of the Empire. Lord Hardinge, to placate Mahomedan sentiment, reconverted Delhi into the headquarters of the Government of the Empire on the one side, and promised a new university at Dacca for the special development of Moslem culture, on the other.

In December, 1912, during the state entry of Lord Hardinge into the new Imperial capital at Delhi at the head of a strikingly spectacular procession, a bomb was thrown at him and Lady Hardinge, it is believed by a Bengali, which wounded both and killed the *mahaut* (driver) of the elephant they were riding. The Viceroy was at once taken to hospital, where his wounds were attended to and found not very serious. In the meantime Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, then the Finance Minister and the senior member of the Council, presided over the state functions in the absence of the Viceroy.

A mint of money has been thrown away (nearly ten crores of rupees already) to give Delhi the dignity and position of an Imperial capital, and yet Delhi remains a phantom city which has yet to be built and elevated to the position of the premier city of the Empire. It is quite apparent that Lord Hardinge wanted to make Delhi the new capital of the Empire without a correct appreciation of the tremendous difficulties that his Government would have to face in materializing his scheme—financial, physical and sanitary.

Though the annulment of the Partition went a long way towards placating Bengali opinion, its effects were far-reaching and injurious both to Bengal and to the Central Government. It at once removed Bengal from its place as the premier province of the Empire, as it removed the Central



Government from contact with the most vocal and influential public opinion in the country. People who know anything of the matter believe that it would have been impossible for Lord Hardinge to carry his proposals through, if Lord Sinha had not then resigned his place in the Viceroy's cabinet, owing to some unfortunate difference with Lord Kitchener, who was still then at the head of His Majesty's Indian Army, and if Mr. Ali Imam (afterwards Sir) had not stepped into his shoes. Lord Sinha, it is confidently believed, if he had still remained at Simla, would have been the last person in the world to sign the Government of India Despatch of August, 1911, which adumbrated the scheme to rob Calcutta of her Imperial Crown and hide it among the ruins and tombs of the seven cities of Delhi. Sir Ali Imam found Lord Hardinge's proposals all that he could desire to promote the interest of his own province of Bihar, and jumped at the idea of it being raised to the position of an independent province, with a Governor and a Council, a University and a High Court. Sir Ali Imam, therefore, felt no hesitation whatever about lending his support to the Hardinge scheme. But what Calcutta lost as an Imperial City, Bengal gained as a compact province and the home of a homogeneous people. It has been truly observed that Bengal as now constituted "differs more from most other Indian provinces than they differ from one another. Economic, temperamental, and social causes account for this difference. Caste is less powerful; a common literary language unites over forty million Bengalis. Even the Moslem community, who form a narrow majority of the population, are indisputably less divided both socially and politically from their Hindu countrymen than they are in other parts of India. The Bengali temperament, at once calculating and emotional, critical and enthusiastic, baffles other Indians almost as much as it puzzles British administrators."<sup>1</sup>

Lord Carmichael, who came from Madras to Bengal as the first Governor under the new scheme, proved an exceedingly tactful head of the administration, but before he was well

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*.

planted in his new office, the European war broke out and put an end to all his ambitious schemes of domestic reform. Between that time and 1917, Indian progress on every side was checked, excepting in the matter which we have described in the chapter on constitutional development. Helping the Allies in the War became the principal pre-occupation of the upper classes of the Indian people, and it is a matter worth noting that, within four months of the declaration of the War, India had sent to one of the theatres of the war in France alone, 24,000 men. The number rose to 40,000 in August, 1915, and fell to 10,000 in March, 1916, at which figure it remained till the Armistice in November, 1918.

Bengal on her part organized at the initial stage of the War a hospital ship and an ambulance corps for Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf, thanks to the wonderful energy and enterprise of the late Dr. Suresh Prosad Sarvadhikari, of Calcutta. Unfortunately the ship foundered in the Bay of Bengal during a heavy cyclone, but the Bengali Corps rendered good account of itself in some of the western theatres of the war. This Corps was in itself not of great historical interest, but its foundation, establishment and organization was a matter of the greatest political and public interest in Bengal, inasmuch as it constituted the first attempt among the *bhadralog* (bourgeois) classes of Bengal to submit to military discipline for the development of physical culture and courage. It may also be noted that this was the beginning of the organization of the future University Corps and of the Territorial Force which developed into 'an Auxiliary Force in later days.

At a meeting of the Indian Legislative Council at Simla, held in the autumn of 1917, a vote for the contribution of 150 crores (£100,000,000) to the Allies was easily got through, in spite of the vehement opposition of Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya. In opposing this motion of Sir William Meyer, then Finance Member of the Government of India, the punditji from Allahabad made a vehement denunciation of the existing administration, which was translated in Germany

under instructions from its Government, and circulated all over the then German Empire, with a view to telling the Teutonic world what young India thought regarding British rule.

While India was abundantly manifesting her loyalty to the British Crown, the Government of India had not ceased to treat the intelligentsia with distrust and suspicion, and under the cover of the Defence of India Act, a special war enactment, hundreds of young men were interned.

At that time also, there was some gun-running between Japan, Batavia, and Bengal, under the concerted directorship of some Punjabis and Bengalis who had settled at Vancouver on the Pacific coast, and others who were serving at the head-quarters of the German army in Berlin. The enterprise of the *Komagata Maru* and the *Emden* was duly checked, and the other plans to send out some ships or steamers to the Sunderbunds with sufficient arms and ammunition to start an armed rebellion, were detected by the Government of India before the ships reached their destination. A detailed account of this movement is to be found in the Report of the Rowlatt Committee which was appointed in 1917, and published its report in 1918. It went very carefully into the question of revolutionary activities in India and revealed widespread disaffection within and without the borders of India.

In Bengal alone, from 1908-17, during the decennium under consideration, nearly twenty armed dacoities took place and twenty-one police officers were murdered, besides a public prosecutor, the headmasters of two schools, two witnesses who had given evidence against members of the revolutionary party, and fifteen other persons who were believed to have given information to Government. In England, in July, 1909, Major Curzon Wyllie was murdered in cold blood almost at the door of the India Office by a young Punjabi student named Dhingra. In all eighty-two persons in Bengal lost their lives during the period, and one hundred and twenty-one were wounded, while attempts were made upon the lives of a number of high officials, including a lieutenant-governor, a district judge, and a district magistrate.

Apart from the story of repression and crime, the period

under review was occupied with the labours of two unfruitful commissions. The Government, both under Lord Morley's and under Lord Crewe's régime, were groping in the dark as to the best means of greasing the wheels of the administrative coach, and were seeking a method of doing this, without materially changing the policy and character of their rule.

A commission known as the Hobhouse Decentralization Commission, which presented its report in 1909, had caused great public disappointment, as it did not take a broad view of its task. Its report surveyed the relations between the Indian and the provincial governments, and also between the latter and the authorities subordinate to them, and recommended a series of measures having for their object the relaxation of control to higher authorities, and the simplification of administrative methods. Romesh Chandra Dutt, as a member of this Committee, submitted a very strong note of dissent in support of the further popularization of local self-governing institutions and the functions of district officers.

In September, 1912, about nine months after the King's visit to India, a Royal Commission was appointed to examine and report in various matters connected with the public services of India, including the consideration of such limitations as existed at that time on the employment of non-Europeans, and the working of the existing division of the services into Imperial and Provincial. This Commission with Lord Islington as its President, and Lord Ronaldshay, Sir Murray Hammick, Messrs. Ramsay Macdonald, F. G. Sly, W. C. Madge, G. K. Gokhale, Sir (then Mr.) Abdur Rahim, and Sir Mahadeo Chaubal as members, recorded an immense volume of evidence, official and non-official, in each province, in 1913 and 1914. The report was completed early in 1915, but, owing to preoccupations during the European War, it was not published until January, 1917. The Report was assailed from all quarters as soon as it was published, and in the language of the *Report on Constitutional Reforms*, "its effect was to irritate rather than to satisfy Indian opinion."

## CHAPTER VIII

### ENTER POLITICS

IN 1914, the European War broke out. Seventeen months after the outbreak of this war, Lord Sinha, presiding over the Thirtieth Session of the Indian National Congress at Bombay, insisted on a frank and open declaration of England's policy and purpose in India. From this time, India's national self-consciousness was growing stage by stage into a political individuality, and the older ideas of political agitation in this country were being thrown into the melting pot, one by one. The habit of looking to England for political concessions and approaching the government with sheaves of prayers for redressal of grievances or grants of new rights was being replaced by a more virile attitude. This attitude of dependence on England, or what was then known as "the mendicant policy", soon gave way to a mentality of self-assertion and demand. In the meantime, the Armageddon in Europe had shown to the world that there was a lamentable dearth of spiritual ideas in all European countries. While smaller and greater Powers of the Continent, and England thrown into the scale, were all fighting for a place in the sun, and trying to elbow one another out from acquiring any new position of influence and dignity, India tried to find a new consolation in her ancient dreams. At this time, the Bengal Provincial Conference was convened to meet in Calcutta, and Chitta Ranjan Das was asked to preside over it. The Conference met almost in the darkest day of the European war, and only a few weeks before the famous Declaration of August 20th, 1917. While he was preparing his address for this Conference in Bengali, he had commissioned a young friend of his to translate it into English. A day before the opening of the conference, this translator was sent for by the Police Commissioner of Calcutta—a procedure which disturbed

Chitta Ranjan to such an extent that he almost passed a sleepless night over the matter. But it appears that he was more concerned with the safety and security of this translation than with the text of his address. We have no doubt that this did not alter the final shape of the address, as Chitta Ranjan had already made up his mind not to follow the beaten track of controversial politics. When it was delivered before the Conference very little of controversial politics was found in it. Chitta Ranjan touched a chord of rhapsody and, instead of dealing with political questions and grievances which exercised the public mind at the time, he sang a new pastoral hymn. The European War had opened his eyes to the evils of a competition and industrialism which he denounced as the golden calf, symbolical of the ideals of Europe. He tried to call a halt to modern materialistic ideas, and appealed to the people to go back and find the soul of India in a new scheme of social and political economy. He wanted the people to go back to the land, improve the villages, develop a new faith and spread it to all the countries of the world. *Ex oriente lux*. He believed that from the days of the Upanishads and the Buddha, light had spread from the east to the other parts of the world, and he was now inoculated with the idea that history must repeat itself. In this belief he took advantage of the platform of the Bengal Provincial Conference to preach a new gospel and a new philosophy of life. The whole speech has been very beautifully summarized by Lord Ronaldshay in a passage in his *Heart of Aryavarta*, which we reproduce here.

“ The state of the country to-day stood in sombre contrast with the Bengal of old. This calamity had been brought about because, in the dust which had been raised by the clash of ideals of East and West, the people had lost sight of their own divinities, and had cast their offerings upon the altars of strange gods. He asked his audience to consider how it was that the people had been thus led astray, and having answered this question, he pointed to the signs which had been given that the scales were falling from their eyes, and while exhorting them to pay heed to these signs and

portents, he himself assumed the rôle of prophet, and pointed the road to the promised land. How was it that they had succumbed to this passion for alien culture and foreign ideals ? It was because when the English came to Bengal the people of the land were decadent. They were a people whose vital spark had burned low, whose Religion of Power had become a mockery of its former self—had lost its soul of beneficence in the repetition of empty formulæ and the observance of meaningless mummeries. As with religion, so with knowledge; the traditions of Navadvîpa's ancient glory and scholarship had become a mere name and memory. And so it had happened to them as it happens to all the weak. From pure inanition they had accepted the English government, and with that the English race—their culture, their civilization and their luxury. But the time had come when they must cast off the spell which had lain upon them. Already prophets of the race had arisen who had kindled once again the fires on the ancient altars. Bankim had come and had set up the image of their Mother in the Motherland. He had called unto the whole people, and had said, 'Behold, this is our Mother, well-watered, well-fruited, cooled with the southern breeze, green with the growing corn; worship her and establish her in your homes'. Time had passed. The trumpet of Swadeshism had begun to sound in 1903. The Swadeshi movement had come like a tempest; it had rushed along impetuously like some mighty flood, submerging them, sweeping them off their feet, but revitalizing their lives. Under its reviving influence they had steeped themselves once again in that stream of culture and civilization which had been flowing perennially through the heart of Bengal. They had been enabled once more to catch glimpses of the true continuity of their national history. The main problem for their consideration, therefore, was this—how to develop fully and adequately the newly awakened life of Bengal ? And assuming the rôle of priest and prophet, he pointed the road. In this critical period of nation building they must root out and cast aside the European ideal of indulgence, and must cleave fast to their native and ancient

ideal of sacrifice. Problems of education and culture, of agriculture and commerce, must be dealt with in the light of their treatment in the past. The connection of these things with their ancient social system must be considered. And not this alone. They must consider also the precise relation in which all their thoughts, endeavours and activities stood, and still stand, with reference to the question of religion, for they would misread and misknow all things unless they kept this point steadily in view. They must accept only what was consonant with the genius of their being, and must reject and utterly cast aside what was foreign to their soul. What they formerly possessed, the permanent and perennial source of their strength, was still theirs. The stately and majestic rivers of Bengal which rushed impetuously towards the sea and the strength and might of which it was impossible to resist—they still flowed onwards in all their ancient majesty and might of strength. The august Himâlaya, ancient of days, still stood lifting up its brow towards heaven. The great permanent features of earth upon which the life and soul of Bengal were founded—they were still there, permanent, immutable, majestic. Theirs the task to restore the life that had fled, to revivify the soul that was all but dead."

Coming to details he formulated his views of life as a comprehensive whole in the following manner :

" To look upon life not as a comprehensive whole but as divided among many compartments was no part of our national culture and civilization. We have borrowed this method from Europe and we have not understood what we have borrowed : and hence the failure of so much of our effort and endeavour. The thing that we are accustomed to describe as politics has in it no organic or intimate connection with the whole of Bengal or the whole of the Bengali people. Will anyone tell me that this portion of our national life is the subject of Politics, that other portion is the subject of Economics, while a third portion is the subject of Sociology ? Must we divide life bit by bit like this ? Must we raise insuperable barriers between these imaginary compartments of ours ? And must our political work be confined to an



imaginary compartment which we have thus enclosed with imaginary walls? Rather, must we not view our political discussions from the standpoint of the whole of our countrymen? And how shall we find truth unless we view life thus comprehensively and as a whole? "

He summed up his line of action as a remedy to the ills and distempers of our social organism in the following ten points :

1. We must give heed to the lessons of history.
2. We must abandon the path of European industrialism.
3. We must stop the decay of villages and the consequent congestion of cities.
4. To do this we shall have to rehabilitate our villages.
5. But our villages can only be rehabilitated if we make them sanitary, and thus enable the peasant to pursue his avocations free from disease.
6. We must train up the agriculturist in the ways of useful handicrafts.
7. We must enquire into the commercial and industrial products of Bengal in the past.
8. We must start small business concerns all over the country with a view to producing those articles for which our people have natural aptitude and skill.
9. We must stop importing foreign commercial products except such as are absolutely essential.
10. We must provide cheap capital for such industries as have a reasonable chance of being profitable, and with this end in view, we must start banking institutions in the different districts.

He further elaborated his scheme of national reconstruction in the following categorical manner :

" (1) You must make your education real; (2) your knowledge must be of things and not words; (3) your education must be in consonance and harmony with the genius of your national being, and its chief object must be the

development of that genius ; and (4) lastly, the chief medium of your education must be Bengali."

Nor did he forget to harp on the popular slogan of a golden age in India :

- " We had corn in our granaries ; our tanks supplied us with fish ; and the eye was soothed and refreshed by the limpid blue of the sky and the green foliage of the trees. All day long the peasant toiled in the fields ; and at eve, returning to his lamp-lit home he sang the song of his heart. But these things are no more. The granaries are empty of their golden wealth ; the kine are dry and give no milk, and the fields once so green are dry and parched with thirst. What remains is the dream of a former happiness and the languor and misery of insistent pain."

It is evident that the picture of a golden age flowing with milk and honey was drawn rather from imagination than from actual records of history. It appears that Chitta Ranjan had himself no time to make any close study of the economic conditions of ancient or mediæval India, and he swallowed all the cheap claptrap and the economic shibboleths of the writers of his time who had pictured to themselves an imaginary golden age for India, only to pit it as a contrast against the dark and dismal days of British rule in this country.<sup>1</sup> It may be that with war and pestilence ravaging the country now and again and preventing the growth of population, the Aryan settlers in India, particularly in Bengal, had always sufficient food at their command. Then, again, the fact must not be forgotten that civilized man in ancient and mediæval India always lived on the banks of large rivers, where plentiful golden harvests were not uncommon. But a mere sufficiency of food products does not make for plenty and prosperity. Three acres and a cow may have given to

<sup>1</sup> The theory of an ever-increasing poverty of India under British Rule has been dealt with at length, by Dadabhoy Naoroji in his *Poverty and un-British Administration in India*, by William Digby in his *Prosperous British India* and by Momesh Chandra Dutt in *India in the Victorian Age* and *Economic History of British India*.

the Bengali cultivator or householder all that he wanted for himself and his family in those days, but could not give him a margin of wealth that might be called prosperity. Nor could there be any prosperity in a country where industries were confined to a few large towns only, and agricultural produce could not be transported outside, and where there was no paper currency, no credit with other nations, and money could only be coined by hand, out of the slender resources of precious metals in the country. Every modern economist would realize that, with a system of purchase by barter and payments made in kind, and all these backed up, not by any reserve of precious metals, but by conch-shells which passed as current coins, the idea of plenty and prosperity could not enter seriously into the economy of our national life. And the fact that famines were not unknown even in that golden age of India is corroborated by some of the Sikhs of the earliest Vedas and by Panini who describes in his lexicon what famine and drought were and how they could be prevented and controlled.

Coming to Mahomedan times, the first great famine we read of occurred about 1022 A.D. After that, there was a famine in Ghor in 1055, one about Delhi and its neighbourhood in 1291, in the reign of Feroz-Shah, another in the same region in 1327, again in 1342 under Sultan Mohamed Tughlak ; one in the Deccan in 1344, one in the Ganges and Jumma Doab in 1413, one in Orissa in 1471, one in Sindh in 1521, another in the same region in 1541<sup>\*</sup>; two in Delhi and neighbourhood in the first and forty-first years of Akbar's reign, two very general and terrible ones in 1631 and 1661, one in the N.W. Province in 1733, and one again in Delhi and its neighbourhood in 1739, and two again in Sindh in 1733 and 1745.

That the distress in some of these famines was very acute can easily be gathered from authentic contemporary accounts. Of one of these famines, we read that "it drove the men of Sindh to eat their own kind", and an instance is quoted of two brothers making "a meal of their mother's flesh",<sup>1</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> Tarikh-i-Tahiri.

Of the severity of another, it is recorded that "man devoured man and that the Hindus came into Delhi with their families, twenty and thirty of them together, and, in the extremity of hunger, drowned themselves in the Jumna".<sup>1</sup> The same story of "man eating man" is repeated in the account of another, and that "the dead found neither coffin nor grave" and that the common people lived upon the seeds of the (babul) thorny acacia, upon dry herbage of the forest and on the hides of cattle. In another we are told "men were driven to the extremity of eating one another and some formed themselves into parties to carry off lone individuals for their food". Ibn Batuta, a celebrated traveller of the fourteenth century, was a personal witness of some of the ravages caused by the famine of 1327, and saw "women eating the skin of horses dead some days before and skins cooked and sold in the markets and crowds fighting for blood at the slaughter house".<sup>2</sup> Of the great famine of 1661, Muhammed Amin Razwiny writes :

"Life was offered for a loaf, but none would buy ; rank was sold for a cake, but none cared for it. For a long time dog's flesh was sold for goats' flesh and the pounded bones of the dead were mixed with flour and sold. Destitution at length reached such a pitch that men began to devour one another and the flesh of a son was preferred to his love. The numbers of the dying caused obstruction in the roads."<sup>3</sup>

As for famines in Bengal, every student of Indian history who has read Sir William Hunter's *Annals of Rural Bengal*, knows the devastating effect of the famine of 1793, which created a sect of bandits, around which Bankim Chandra Chatterji has woven his inspiring story of the "Ananda Math". Of famine of an earlier period, a glowing account is given, in the Ballads of Mymensingh,<sup>4</sup> in the story of Konoram the famous robber chief. At this time (about the close of the sixteenth century), states Chandravati, the village

<sup>1</sup> Tarikh-i-Feroz Shah.

<sup>2</sup> Elliot's History of India, Vol. III, page 19.

<sup>3</sup> Badshah Nama.

<sup>4</sup> Collected and published by Rai Bahadur Dinesh Chandra Sen.

poetess, the district of Mymensingh was visited by one of the most cruel famines that had ever come upon Bengal. She describes its horrors in graphic details. "The homes of many families became scenes of terrible suffering, and men and women die by hundreds: husbands sold their wives, and wives their children. All conventions, all affections and feeling were gone, and men became like lower animals seeking the whole day long for something to live upon."

If Chitta Ranjan meant peace by his golden age, certainly there was enough of it in those days, for men had very few wants, and these were easily met. But he unfortunately fell into a serious error when he confounded this peace with plenty and prosperity. With enormous reserves of paper and metallic currency, with millions of money absorbed as precious metals, with a stable currency, with unlimited credit established all over the world in consequence of an ever-increasing trade and commerce, with infinite expansion and development of industries, with increasingly high prices for agricultural produce in all the markets of the world, and with life and property made secure, India must be considered much more rich and prosperous to-day than she was even in the golden age of Ram Chandra of Ayodhya. In an age when society develops with multiplicity of wants, and every man casts his eyes on the world abroad, it is difficult for people to make both ends meet, and if to-day India is poor compared with more advanced nations of the West, and India is unhappy compared with a bygone age, no one would like to return to the placid contentment of the good old days, when three acres and a cow were considered good enough for all the practical purposes of life. Chitta Ranjan evidently put on his colours rather too thickly, and through having done so, he unfortunately failed to win the active co-operation of his people to his view of village and rural reconstruction. This part of his speech at Bhowanipur, though it tickled the fancy of his audience, was not considered practical politics, but the rest of it lingered in the heart of Bengal.

There was nothing new about this rhapsody of Chitta Ranjan. Thirteen years before, in 1904, Rabindra Nath

Tagore, at a public meeting held in the Albert Hall in Calcutta, had painted to a Bengali audience the picture of a golden age before the advent of the British in India, and suggested that the reconstruction of Indian society was only possible on old and orthodox lines. As a first step, Rabindra Nath wanted to set up a dictator, whose word should be law unto the people of Bengal in all domestic, social and political matters. But as in 1904 so in 1917, nothing came of the dreamer's rhapsody.<sup>1</sup>

The Bengal Provincial Conference of 1917 happily proved to be the starting-point of Chitta Ranjan's public and political career. At this time, Parliament made its declaration regarding British policy and purpose in India. The older school of Indian public opinion jumped at the idea of a new chapter in Indian constitutional development, while the new and the extremist school, with Bal Gangadhar Tilak as its principal leader, looked upon it with cold disdain. When Mr. Montagu came out on his political mission to India, as a result of this declaration and at the invitation of Lord Chelmsford, then Viceroy, of the older leaders of the Moderate Party few were left. Pheroze Shah Mehta, perhaps the most talented and constructive statesman of his day, and Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the most sagacious and long-headed politician of this time, had both passed away. Bhupendra Nath Basu and Sir Satyendra Prasanna Sinha had been absorbed in the service of His Majesty—one at Whitehall, and the other in the Government of Bengal. The Moderate Party had, therefore, no alternative but to follow the lead of Surendra Nath Banerjea, whose outlook in politics did not come into line with his powers of oratory. If he and his followers had not been captivated by the lure of the Montagu Mission, perhaps the Government of India Act of 1919 would have taken a different shape. But Surendra Nath lacked

<sup>1</sup> As soon as Rabindra Nath had read his paper, his position was controverted by the present writer in an article contributed to the pages of the *Prabasi*, then the best-known and most widely circulated periodical in Bengal. Sir Gooroodas Banerjea, who presided at Rabindra Nath's meeting, soon came forward with a disclaimer of any idea of setting up a Dictatorship in Bengal, and thereupon the whole movement fizzled out.

political insight and the courage of his convictions and toed the line with pro-Indian European thought in the matter. While Surendra Nath Banerjea and the Moderate Party missed their opportunity Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Chitta Ranjan Das forged ahead as the zealous advocates of the country's new demands. When Chitta Ranjan Das appeared before the Montagu Mission as witness, he formulated a demand on behalf of his country which almost took away the breath of Mr. Montagu and his colleagues. In this evidence, he demanded complete control of the purse, as well as control over all services in the country. Of course, he left the Army, the Navy and the railways alone for the time being. This proved to be the time when the articulate opinion of the country began to accuse Surendra Nath of having feet of clay; the people displaced him from their hearts, and transferred their homage and allegiance to Chitta Ranjan Das and Bal Gangadhar Tilak for their definite stand against the Montagu Declaration. A few months after this Declaration, Chitta Ranjan availed himself of the opportunity of the long vacation of the High Court to go out on an extensive tour in the eastern districts of Bengal, giving to the people his new philosophy and preaching his new gospel. In course of this itinerary, he delivered a speech at Chittagong; in which he ferociously attacked the Moderates, and denounced them with indiscriminating bitterness, describing their leader, Surendra Nath Banerjea, as an impostor.

Hitherto, before 1917, Chitta Ranjan had been a mere spectator of the game of Indian politics, and a dweller on the hill-top; he had spoken little and had mixed with men of the street; but from this year he began to attend the Congress annually and take a leading part in its deliberations. He was elected to all the important Committees of the Congress, and his services, particularly his purse and his tongue, were requisitioned in all parts of India. It fell principally on him at this time to formulate the new aspirations in the country and give a lead and orientation to the political thought of the new school, as the saint of Sarbarmati had not then emerged from his Ashram and

entered into Indian politics. Indian politics became an exceedingly complex and absorbing business, and Nationalist Indian opinion for the first time became clamant and demonstrative.

When Chitta Ranjan Das seriously entered politics in 1917, two different streams of political ideas had commingled and joined their waters to create a surging tide of national sentiment. At this converging point India began to formulate her demands for Swaraj. Of these two main currents, one had its source in the time and world-forces for the self-determination of nations, and had flowed into a purely academic and intellectual channel; the other current was the outcome of an anxiety to remove the grievances of the passing hour and the defects of the short-sided administration. The question, therefore, has to be considered from two different and independent points of view—one purely academic—and the other, practical—and in the next two chapters we shall discuss both aspects at some length.



## CHAPTER IX

### INDIA'S DEMAND FOR SWARAJ

MAN, according to Aristotle, is a social animal. This social trait is the foundation of a community of interest and the genesis of states and governments. We had in the dim morning of history the family-state developing into a city-state in Greece, and the patriarchal system developing into a republic in ancient Rome, and groups of families developing into a caste or tribal state in India. The city-state was the last word of Hellenic Greece in politics ; the forum and the Senate, of the eternal city on the seven hills ; but in India we passed through various forms of it until we came to territorial states in the days of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata,<sup>1</sup> the two great epics of the Hindus. The idea of the territorial state was firmly established in India from the earliest historical times down to the beginning of the tenth century, when, with the Mahomedan invasion of India, a process of disintegration set in all over Upper or Northern India, resulting in the complete collapse of the powers that then held sway. While ancient Greece and Rome were the happy hunting-grounds of all sorts of 'crude essays and experiments in government, no particular form remained in vogue for any length of time. Aristocracy, timocracy, oligarchy or plutocracy, democracy and tyranny, all had a fair trial in the ancient polity of Greece and Rome, though the ideal city—governed by philosopher-statesmen with no special desire to promote their personal interests or take any advantage of the opportunities of position, and devoting all their attention and energy to the best interest of the state—remained confined to the Dialogues of Plato.

In ancient India, democratic ideas had permeated deeply into local institutions, but they found little favour in the

<sup>1</sup> See K. P. Jaswala's *Hindu Polity*, and U. N. Ghosal's *Hindu Political Theories*.

constitution of states. In ancient India, therefore, we do not meet with a large variety of forms of government. Though some of the monarchies and empires had nearly materialized the platonic ideal of a city "whose maker and builder is God," republics and democracies never came much into vogue at any time in our history. The Indian aspiration of good government was generally satisfied by the Rajah who, in early times, meant "the man who pleased his people". The ancient Indian states, such as founded by Chandragupta and Asoka were therefore a combination of temporal and spiritual powers and resembled to some extent the Holy Roman Empire and the Court of the Vatican. This central idea of Hindu government continued till the seventh century, when Hieun Tshang came into India and left a glowing account of the principalities of his day.

Government has been defined by competent jurists as organized force—a force to rule and dominate. In well-developed states, behind this organized force lies the authority and the sanction of the people. In less-developed states and conquered countries, this authority is the dread of the mailed fist and the consequent acquiescence of the people in government by superior force.

When India lost her independence and passed into the hands of her Mahomedan conquerors, the authority of the government in this country came to depend, not on the willing consent of the people, but on a spirit of resignation to circumstances. Under British rule, no material change has taken place in the fundamental character of government, and the authority that the British possess to-day for the governance of India is not unlike the power with which the Great Mogul ruled this country in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries.

The British, having taken up the threads of government and administration from the Mahomedans, have worked steadily to broaden the basis of their rule in India. Modern states have two different functions to discharge: the constituent part is the usual category of Governmental function—the protection of life, liberty and property, together with all

other functions that are necessary to the civic organization and preservation of society. So far as the satisfactory discharge of this function goes, the British administration in India can stand all tests fairly well. The other functions of the state consist of ministrant work which is undertaken not by way of governing but by way of advancing the general interest of society and assisting every social organization intended to promote the welfare of the body politic. In the modern world, a wide latitude of opinion prevails as to what exactly should constitute the ministrant functions of the state. There is little difference of opinion, however, in the civilized world, regarding the inclusion of education, sanitation, care of the poor and incapable, and the regulation of trade and industry and labour under this category. Some modern states, for example Germany, Switzerland, the United States and Japan, are pushing these ministrant functions to their widest limits in order to raise the condition of the people in all ways, from the satisfaction of their spiritual needs down to attention to all their individual and corporate requirements.

In trying to broaden the basis of their rule in India, the English have discharged the constituent functions of the state very satisfactorily, and to-day the Pax Britannica is more firmly established in this country than perhaps in any other part of the British Empire. The maintenance of peace and the security of the life and property of the people are indispensable to the maintenance of law and order, but in their anxiety to discharge the policeman's work efficiently, the English have very much over-estimated one part and neglected the other, and evidently the more important function. It must be confessed we are somewhat over-governed in many matters.

Of all the ministrant functions of the state, the fight with ignorance and poverty, disease and death, and the uplifting of the condition of the masses are now regarded in every part of the civilized world as the most urgent and pressing. In India, however, the existing government has not so far succeeded in achieving any notable progress either in spreading the light of knowledge or in reducing to any

appreciable extent the havoc and misery caused by plague and malaria, famine and poverty. In education, which Plato considered " the sure basis of a well-ordered state " and which every modern country is putting to-day in the forefront of all its activities, India has made such unconscionably slow progress, that a few years ago the late William Jennings Bryan, a great figure in American politics of his time, found himself compelled to lament over it in very strong terms. What a pity that the Anglo-Indian administration should spend only 2 as. per head for education, while the United States spends over Rs. 16 per head, England more than Rs. 9, and Japan Rs. 8 for the education of their people. After this niggardly expenditure on education no one should be surprised to find that only 5 per cent. of the people in all India can be described as literates, and only 9 per cent. in Bengal. Against this the figures of literacy stand at 98 per cent. in Japan, 95 per cent. in the United States, and 93 per cent. in England. This appalling disparity of national expenditure on education between some of the civilized countries of the world and India, and the wide divergence of the figures of literacy in these countries leave no doubt in anyone's mind as to how this great nation-building department has been neglected by our rulers. In sanitation also, we have made very little progress ; and so on to the end of the chapter. The sum total of Indian prosperity may have advanced under British rule but large classes have gone down before unequal competition. India still continues mainly to be an agricultural country. A race that sticks like a limpet to the soil may be happy and even self-satisfied, but can never be great and prosperous. And as for the literate classes, though so scanty in number, they have few avenues of life open to them, and hardly any considerable share in the industrial and commercial exploitation of the resources and raw materials of the country. The lack of multiplicity of occupation has converted our middle classes into practically a nation of clerks. As Treitschke, the great German apostle of blood and iron, said a few years back with a sneer : " clerks of good family are found only in India, if at all ".

Our existing government has not always cared to conquer the vagaries of Nature and harness her forces for the benefit of our people, though its work in bringing scientific knowledge to the use and benefit of man has not been negligible. We remain condemned before the civilized world as an "unprogressive" people, because our government have not found it wise to accelerate the pace of reforms as we would have it. It appears very natural, however, and modern history corroborates the fact, that no foreign power can discharge the ministrant functions of the state adequately and satisfactorily so long as it does not enlist the active co-operation and is thoroughly identified with all the interests, of the governed.

The chief ideal of C. R. Das and other advanced Indian Nationalists was therefore to convert the Indian State into a principal instrument for the discharge of its ministrant functions properly and in healthy competition with all civilized countries, and to enable it to march side by side with the proudest nations of the world.

His second reason for demanding full-blooded self-government was our anxiety, in the interest both of England and of India, to see the end of a system of benevolent despotism carried on through a self-willed bureaucracy. In the history of this world, this system of government has not been always an unredeemed chapter of misery and oppression. Cincinnatus and Marcus Aurelius, Augustus and Hadrian in the West, and Sree Krishna and Rām Chandra, Asoka and Akbar in the East, have been benevolent despots whose rule would be welcome in any clime and under any circumstance. But, unfortunately for the world, despots of such a type are not easy to find in every generation. The Great Mogul has been nearly as great a curse in India as the House of Bourbon in France. With a different education and under the influence of a different civilization, India no longer wants her governors to fill the rôle of benevolent despots. India has suffered too long under restrictions of personal and public liberty, and her forbearance has been strained to breaking-point.

Despotism, however benevolent and self-sacrificing it may be, has generally been found everywhere in the world to be helpless, nervous, irresponsible, capricious and weak. It is more often than not inspired by panic, because it is not always sure of the mind of the governed, and panic inevitably brings cruelty and repression in its train. The State under such a rule is bound to be a weak one, and the weak state cannot afford to be tolerant any more than the poor can afford to be generous. Even in England, so long as the State was under foreign influence and was consequently weak, it was much more cruel than the present Government of India is, and distinguished historians have told us that the hideous treason-laws of Tudor and Stuart times were due more to unfounded fear and panic than to any real necessity. To all intents and purposes, our State is weak, and it is weak because it does not carry the community with it. Chitta Ranjan Das as the spokesman of the new school, desires the end of benevolent despotism and the bureaucracy that supports it, because, in the first instance, as pointed out by John Stuart Mill, consciousness of responsibility to no one but oneself is always a precarious guarantee of right action, and in the second, we want to give to our State the colour and complexion which would agree with the genius and temperament of our race. We would rather be governed by a cold, soulless, representative machinery than be fantastically treated to fits of concession and oppression by the best-meaning bureaucracy in the world.

Almost every educated Indian of to-day wants his people to be the real state in the country. "The State? I am the State", said Louis XIV; and this presumptuous assumption of the functions of the State by a crowned head made a travesty of government in France in the eighteenth century, and in Russia in the nineteenth. It is impossible for a foreign bureaucracy to get into the skin of an alien people, across 7,000 miles of deep sea, and then be closely identified with the interests and aspirations of the people. If the object of the State is to become virtually identified with the thought and aspiration of the people and if it is to be the centre of the

civic affection and civic virtue of the people, surely the present Government can never pretend to fill that place.

England could never understand India even if she wished to. Monsieur Georges Bourdon, a distinguished Frenchman, after having conducted an enquiry among Germans for a long number of years as to what they think, what they want, what they can do, writes : " In spite of all our excellent and just estimates of her, we know nothing of Germany ; neither does she know anything of us ".<sup>1</sup> If this be true of two European countries which have lived for centuries as neighbours and derived their inspiration of life from a common civilization, how abysmal must be the ignorance of England with regard to the life and thought of the Indian people ! It is not difficult to maintain, with Lords Morley and Cromer, that no democracy can maintain an Empire, particularly with such an imperfect knowledge of its affairs. This ignorance may prove fatal both to England and India, and the only remedy is to take the whole people of India into the confidence of the rulers, as was the heart's desire of Das, by introducing a full measure of self-government into the constitution of this country.

India to-day grumbles at being governed by a foreign bureaucracy because she has now reached a definite standard of political individuality. The rule of the Indian Civil Service has become abhorrent to the cultivated intelligence and the sense of self-respect of the educated Indian of the twentieth century. He would have very little of it if he could have his way, though one must admit that many members of this Service have given the best of their lives in ameliorating the conditions of our people in various ways. " Officials ", justly remarks Mr. Nevinson, " usually govern badly, because they naturally magnify their office and routine above life, regarding the intrusion of reality as an unwarrantable disturbance to their habitual toil or leisure. But that is not the worst of it. Even under the most efficient officialdom, the governed suffer a degrading loss of personality." If this be true of an indigenous officialdom, how bitter and

<sup>1</sup> *The German Enigma.*

galling it must be when the officialdom is alien, as in India ? Mr. Nevinson continues : " It is disastrous to maintain order, however mechanically perfect, or to organize virtue and comfort, however judiciously proportionate, if personality and variety are gone. Self-government is better than good government and self-government implies the right to go wrong. It is nobler for a nation, as for a man, to struggle towards excellence with its own natural force and vitality, however blindly and vainly, than to live in irreproachable decency under expert guidance from without ". That is just what Das had striven, struggled, lived and died for.

India, fortunately or unfortunately, no longer looks upon the problem of government with the self-satisfied complacency of the middle ages. She has now been thrown into the vortex of world-politics and she cannot, therefore, live in an atmosphere of detachment from the currents and forces of modern life. She realizes to-day what very little progress she has made under the heel of despotic and bureaucratic rule for over a thousand years, and looks abroad and is amazed by the giant strides that some of the European countries have made during the last three or four centuries, and Japan in less than a hundred years of striving after progress.

In Europe, the seventeenth century was marked by the overthrow of absolutism through the efforts of the English ; the eighteenth century saw the overthrow of oligarchy, thanks to France ; and the nineteenth the birth of nationalism, due chiefly to Germany, and some wholesome advance towards democracy. Democratic rule is now practically established all over Europe and America, and in Japan and China and Persia, Turkey and Egypt. India refuses to lag behind and to be deprived of the heritage of the modern world.

The sort of democracy that was accepted as the gospel of ancient Greece and Rome has been supplanted in the course of evolution by a system of government which is representative of the people. Plato and Aristotle conceived the State as an unit, and human beings as fractions of this unit. Representative government, as conceived by De Tocqueville, Rousseau or Comte in France, or by Bentham, Mill, Grote



and Bain in England, makes the individual the unit of the State, and makes "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" its principal concern. It is not necessary for our purpose to define this happiness. We may, however, in passing, mention that Aristotle defined this happiness, in his *Ethics*, as lying "in the active exercise of a man's vital powers along the lines of excellence, in a life affording full scope for their development." India desires that her people should also claim the greatest happiness of the greatest number, a thing, which is only possible by the establishment of Swaraj.

But a more potent reason for our demand of self-government is the insistent anxiety of India to develop a political personality. As Treitschke observes: "The ideal of one State containing all mankind is no ideal at all. The whole content of civilization cannot be realized in a single State. All people, just like individual men, are one-sided, but in the very fulness of onesidedness the richness of the human race is seen. The rays of the divine light only appear in individual nations infinitely broken; each one exhibits a different picture and a different conception of the divinity. Every people has, therefore, the right to believe that certain powers of the divine reason display themselves in it at their highest. Without overrating itself, a people does not arrive at knowledge of itself at all. . . . Such a feeling is necessary in order that the people may preserve and maintain itself". India has very often in the past contributed very materially to the civilization of man and carried the light of the East to the Western world. Why, why should she not again be asked, or allowed the opportunity, to come to the front of the nations and give her best to the service of God and Man?

And then, above everything, we desire self-government because that seems to be the natural condition of all people and communities. Locke says: "Men being by nature all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this estate and subjected to the political power of another without his consent. The only way whereby anyone divests himself of his natural liberty and puts on the bonds of civil society is

by agreeing with other men to join and unite into a community". Rousseau had similarly laid down the proposition in his *Social Contract* that man is born free, and that his primitive nature was not anger or strife, but liberty and equality. Or as Swift says: "All government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery". We want, therefore, to stand upon the natural rights of man. Like the sleeping lion in the story, India has now awakened to a consciousness of her power and position, thanks to her contact with England, and she will have no rest or peace till she has become a free, organic, self-conscious and self-directing nation, with her great organs of popular representation and all constitutional guarantees of personal and public liberty,—the great lever of social morality organized to enforce the collective and co-ordinating conscience of her whole people.

The question of India's fitness for self-government appeared to Das, unlike Lord Sinha's idea of Swaraj, to be a merely academic question. Every nation has a right to govern itself, no matter whether she is fitted for it or no. As self-government varies from very crude systems of representative government to the most complicated popular control culminating in the "referendum", so there can be no particular or definite standard of fitness for it. As soon as a nation comes into this heritage, it begins to grow into freedom and work out its destiny to the best of its light, however feeble that light may be. There is no special qualification, no specified time, no particular condition of development by which a nation deserves its natural heritage of self-government. The history of every independent state will show that it has developed its peculiar and distinctive form of self-government, independently of any parallel or precedent and without condition of heredity or environment. It is the equal privilege of savage tribes in the Pacific Islands as of highly-developed social organisms on the continent of Europe. It does not even depend upon any measure of social or intellectual freedom. To ignore, therefore, the famous principle of political philosophy enunciated by the late Sir

Henry Campbell-Bannerman, that self-government is better than good government, is the prime offence of all benevolent despots, who seek to benefit by their rule either the people of their own country or the subject races of an Empire. Englishmen and Indians who raise the question of our fitness really do not comprehend the right issue and only fill the atmosphere with fog in order to avoid the realities of life. Mr. Lionel Curtis very rightly observes: "The exercise of responsibility tends to increase fitness for exercising it. As everyone finds in his own experience, it is in having to do things that a man learns how to do them and develops a sense of duty in regard to them. And that is why political power is and ought to be extended to whole classes of citizens, even when their knowledge and sense of responsibility is still imperfectly developed".<sup>1</sup> Fit or not fit, let us have the right to look into our own affairs as best we may. Let us have the right to govern ourselves, even if it be to muddle our affairs, for that surely is much better than leaving things to be muddled by others. An English writer has put the idea very clearly: "Only by development out of unfitness, obviously, is fitness attainable".<sup>2</sup>

There remains another question for our consideration. It has been suggested in some quarters that we have forfeited our claim to self-rule by being a conquered and a divided people. England herself has, at different periods, been conquered and held under subjection by the Romans, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes and Normans, not to speak of the successful inroads by the Picts and Scots from the North. Not long before Simon de Montfort laid the foundation of representative government in England, Anglo-Saxon patriotism never transcended provincial bounds. Foreigners ruled and owned the land, and the term "native" became synonymous with "serf". The great mass of the population were always at the beck and call of their lords, were like their goods and chattels, and could not leave their land, nor marry, nor enter the Church, nor go to school without their

<sup>1</sup> *The Problem of the Commonwealth.*

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Robertson in *Rationale of Autonomy.*

leave. Even so late as the seventeenth century, under James I, Parliamentary and popular privileges in England existed by royal grace and could not be claimed as rights. And not till the Long Parliament, which met in the reign of Charles I, did the English people demand that the ministers of the State should have the confidence of Parliament, for they now realized that sovereignty could not be divided and it was impossible to keep peace between a sovereign legislature and a sovereign executive while each was anxious to stand on its own rights and authority. And, lastly, it was not till the middle of the eighteenth century that Walpole became the first Prime Minister of England, when the responsibility of government was really transferred from the head of the monarchy and laid on the head of the Parliament. And as for education, England has not made any decisive or satisfactory advance till the passing of the Elementary Education Act in 1870. If full and free responsible government has developed in England in such circumstances, India has no need to despair of her future.

The examples of French Canada, of the South African Union, of Ireland, of the Phillippine Islands, of Egypt and of Italy about the middle of the nineteenth century also preclude us from considering the question that submission to superior physical force involves the forfeiture of the right to self-government. Nor is it any good discussing the fact that several countries in the world, together with some of our own native states, enjoy this privilege under very discouraging circumstances and unfavourable conditions of life. Nor, with the cases of Persia, China, Japan, Egypt and Turkey before us, can it any longer be maintained that self-government is the privilege of only the West, and that in the East it is like the desire of the moth for the star.

- Buckle and Seeley have both held, of course from different points of view, that we are unfit and disqualified for self-government for reasons over which we have no control. Buckle has maintained that our climate, our conditions of social life, principally the caste system, and our staple food, rice, keep us out of the zone of the civilized world. Seeley,

on the other hand, has laid down the proposition that a people which has no community of interest in religion, speech and blood, must necessarily lack the solidarity which can make of it a nation. Though the theories of Buckle and Seeley have not yet been completely exploded by modern historical and political investigations, not much weight is attached to their opinions in these days, in view of the great development of representative institutions in countries like Russia and Germany, in Persia and China and also in some parts of South America.<sup>1</sup> Nor must the fact be overlooked that the definition of nationality has in recent years undergone a substantial modification: as modern historians and political philosophers consider nationality a psychological concept rather than a material formula.

England has placed to her credit many humanitarian efforts in her administration of India, but in nothing has she met with greater success than in welding the heterogeneous masses of our population into one nation. We may not yet be one nation, but there can be no doubt that we are in a fair way of becoming one. India no longer represents a mere geographical expression as it used to in the days of Sir George Chesney and the Strachey brothers, and the throbbing of an Indian nationality is now distinctly felt in every part of this great Empire. As the Norman, coming from outside and exempt from all local prejudice, applied at one time the same methods of government and exploitation to all parts of England, so the Englishman has brought common ideas and common laws to bear upon all parts of India. And as in England in Norman times, so in India to-day, the steady pressure of a super-imposed civilization has tended to obliterate local and class distinctions and the differences of religions and languages. We read in Mr. Pollard's *History of England*, "unwittingly Norman and

<sup>1</sup> The late Mr. William Archer restarted the theory that India could not be regarded as a civilized country. To this charge, Mr. J. T. (now Sir John) Woodroffe, for sometime a judge of the Calcutta High Court, replied, a few years ago, in a book entitled *Is India Civilized?* This book, with Professor Max Müller's *India, What Can She Teach Us?* ought to be read by every Englishman who comes out to India for business, service, or pleasure.

Angevin despotism made an English nation out of Anglo-Saxon tribes, as English despotism has made a nation out of Irish septs and will make another out of the hundred races and religions of our Indian Empire". Mr. Pollard has elaborated this theory at length, and I find it impossible to resist making one further extract from this portion of his book as a reply to Buckle and Seeley. "The difficulties of despotic rule", says Mr. Pollard, "were mitigated in the past by the utter absence of any common sentiments and ideas among the many races, religions and castes which constituted India, and a Machiavellian perpetuation of these divisions might have eased the labours of its governors. But a government suffers for its virtues, and the steady efforts of Great Britain to civilize and educate its Eastern subjects have tended to destroy the divisions which made common action, common aspirations, public opinion and self-government impossible in India. . . . They have built railways and canals, which made communications and contact unavoidable ; they have imposed common measures of health, common legal principles, and a common education in English culture and methods of administration. The result has been to foster a consciousness of nationality, the growth of a public opinion, and a demand for a greater share in the management of affairs. The more efficient a despotism, the more certain is its suppression ; and the problem for the Indian government is how to adjust and adapt the political emancipation of the natives of India to the slow growth of their education and sense of moral responsibility."

This is just the problem for us and our administrators to tackle to-day, and, as self-government is not only the end but also the means to the end, India will not be satisfied until her hunger for self-rule is appeased and she is given a free hand to manage her own affairs according to the light that is in her.

## CHAPTER X

### EVOLUTION OF THE DEMAND FOR "SWARAJ"

It is one thing to formulate a vague demand for Swaraj ; it is quite another to understand and appreciate correctly the various implications underlying the term. Of course, no one has hitherto defined the word Swaraj in a quite precise and scientific manner, but some idea can be formed of what the Indian mind understands by the term to-day by following the historical evolution of the various interpretations put on the term from time to time by the leaders of the Nationalist movement. The word " swaraj " was first used in Indian political literature by Dadabhoy Naoroji in his Presidential Address at the Calcutta Congress in 1906. We give below the portion of his speech in which he discussed our claim to Swaraj :

" All our sufferings and evils of the past centuries demand before God and man a reparation, which we may fairly expect from the present revival of the old noble British instincts of liberty and self-government. . . .

" The British people would not allow themselves to be subjected for a single day to such an unnatural system of government as the one which has been imposed upon India for nearly a century and a half. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman once made a happy quotation from Mr. Bright : ' I remember John Bright quoting in the House of Commons on one occasion two lines of a poet with reference to political matters :

There is on earth a yet diviner thing,  
Veiled though it be, than Parliament or King.

" Then Sir Henry asks : ' What is that diviner thing ? It is the human conscience inspiring human opinion and human sympathy '. I [Mr. Dadabhoy Naoroji] ask them to

extend that human conscience, 'the diviner thing', to India. In the words of Mr. Morley :

" 'It will be a bad day indeed if we have one conscience for the Mother Country and another conscience for all that vast territory over which your eye does not extend'."

Mr. Dadabhoy Naoroji proceeded to observe : " And now the next question is : What are the British rights which we have a right to claim ?

" This is not the occasion to enter into any details or argument. I keep to broad lines.

" (1) Just as the administration of the United Kingdom in all services, departments, and details is in the hands of the people themselves of that country, so should we in India claim that the administration in all services, departments, and details should be in the hands of the people themselves of India.

" This is not only a matter of right and matter of the aspirations of the educated—important enough as these matters are—but it is far more an absolute necessity as the only remedy for the great inevitable economic evil which Sir John Shore pointed out a hundred and twenty years ago, and which is the fundamental cause of the present drain and poverty. The remedy is absolutely necessary for the material, moral, intellectual, political, social, industrial and every possible progress and welfare of the people of India.

" (2) As, in the United Kingdom and the Colonies, all taxation and legislation and the power of spending the taxes are in the hands of the representatives of the people of those countries, so should also be the rights of the people of India.

" (3) All financial relations between England and India must be just and on a footing of equality—i.e., whatever money India may find towards expenditure in any department, civil or military or naval, to the extent of that share should Indians share in all the



benefits of that expenditure in salaries, pensions, emoluments, materials, etc., as a partner in the Empire, as she is always declared to be. We do not ask any favours. We only want justice. Instead of going into any further divisions or details of our rights as British citizens, the whole matter can be comprised in one word—'self-government', or 'Swaraj', like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies".

Evidently, what Dadabhoy Naoroji meant by "Swaraj" in 1906, was something quite different from what is understood by the term to-day. With Naoroji it meant some sort of responsible government, of course within the Empire. He asked for more personal rights, greater liberties, and the bulk of high offices in the State to be thrown open to the Indian people. Within the scope of his "Swaraj" might also be included a scheme of all-round retrenchment, including the reduction of the military budget, and less bureaucratic rule and more popular control in all administrative affairs.

The Hobhouse Commission of Decentralization, appointed in 1907, and the Public Services Commission of 1913, over which Lord Islington presided, to both of which we have referred in a previous chapter, were feeble attempts made by the Government to compromise with the objective Mr. Dadabhoy Naoroji had in view. The Reports of these commissions, instead of placating Indian feeling, tended to irritate it. Between Dadabhoy Naoroji's pronouncement of 1906, and the publication of the Islington Commission's Report in 1916, much water had flowed down the Ganges, and, with the great European War, quite a tidal wave of national self-consciousness flooded the Indian mind.

In the Congress of 1920, however, Mr. Gandhi gave a new meaning to the word "Swaraj". From the year 1908, when Bal Gangadhar Tilak stood up for "Swaraj" at Surat, till 1920, the Indian Nationalist mind had always understood by this word a form of responsible government within the British Empire. At any rate, this idea lay behind the creed of the Congress, which every delegate to it was required to sign,

and had willingly subscribed to for close upon twelve years. In the Congress of 1920, held at Nagpur, Mr. Gandhi got that body to accept an amendment to its constitution which pulverized the Indian attachment to the British connection, and carried the idea of "Swaraj" much beyond the original concept.

When Chitta Ranjan Das threw himself seriously into politics, he defined this word in various ways from time to time.

After the Congress of 1920, the non-co-operation movement began to make converts by the thousands, and the cry of Swaraj was echoed and re-echoed from every house-top. But hardly one in a hundred could ever explain what the word meant or what implications were hid behind it. Mr. Gandhi remained silent as the sphinx; so also did Chitta Ranjan. In the meantime, at the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Barisal in 1921, its President<sup>1</sup> made an attempt to point out that the Indian mind was heading for a democratic Swaraj. But with this, Chitta Ranjan, who was present at the Conference as a delegate, joined issue. Chitta Ranjan persisted in maintaining that the word admitted of no definition and that "Swaraj was Swaraj". At that time his idea of Swaraj, like Mr. Gandhi's, was rather a psychological or a subjective perception than a mere political objective.

In his last public utterance at Faridpur<sup>2</sup> six weeks before his death, Chitta Ranjan further developed his ideas in the matter and gave his support to a form of Dominion Home Rule as a form of Swaraj within the British Empire.

In his Gaya speech<sup>3</sup> (December, 1922), Chitta Ranjan thus outlines a scheme of Government consonant with his ideas of Swaraj. "A question has often been asked as to what is Swaraj. Swaraj is indefinable, and is not to be confused with any particular system of Government. There is all the difference in the world between *Swarajya* (self-rule) and *Samrajya* (rule of the country). Swaraj is the natural expression of the national mind. The full outward

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix D.

expression of that mind covers, and must necessarily cover, the whole life history of a nation. Yet it is true that Swaraj begins when the true development of a nation begins, because as I have said Swaraj is the expression of the national mind. The question of nationalism, therefore, looked at from another point of view, is the same question as that of Swaraj. The question of all questions in India to-day is the attainment of Swaraj. . . .

“To me the organization of village life and the practical autonomy of small local centres are more important than either provincial autonomy or central responsibility ; and if the choice lay between the two, I would unhesitatingly accept the autonomy of the local centres. I must not be understood as implying that the village centres will be disconnected units. They must be held together by a system of co-operation and integration. For the present, there must be power in the hands of the provincial and the Indian Government ; but the ideal should be accepted once for all, that the proper function of the central authority, whether in the Provincial or in the Indian Government, should be to advise, having a residuary power of control only in the case of need and to be exercised under proper safeguards. I maintain that real Swaraj can only be attained by vesting the power of Government in these local centres, and I suggest that the Congress should appoint a Committee to draw up a scheme of Government which would be acceptable to the nation. . . .

“To frame such a scheme of Government, regard must therefore be had to :

(1) The <sup>F</sup>formation of local centres more or less on the lines of the ancient village system of India.

(2) The growth of larger and larger groups out of the integration of these village centres.

(3) The unifying state should be the result of similar growth.

(4) The village centres and the larger groups as practically autonomous.

(5) The fact that the residuary power of control must remain in the central government, but the exercise of such power should be exceptional and for that purpose proper safeguards should be provided, so that the practical autonomy of the local centres may be maintained, and at the same time the growth of the central Government into a really unifying state may be possible. The ordinary work of such central Government should be mainly advisory."

After enunciating this general proposition, Chitta Ranjan proceeded to outline a scheme of Swaraj in the following manner: "No system of Government which is not for the people and by the people can ever be regarded as the true foundation of Swaraj. I am firmly convinced that a parliamentary Government is not a Government by the people and for the people. Many of us believe that the middle class must win Swaraj for the masses. I do not believe in the possibility of any class movement being ever converted into a movement for Swaraj. If to-day the British Parliament grants provincial autonomy in the provinces with responsibility in the central Government, I for one will protest against it, because that will inevitably lead to the concentration of power in the hands of the middle class. I do not believe that the middle class will then part with their power. How will it profit India, if in place of the white bureaucracy that now rules over her, there is substituted an Indian bureaucracy of the middle classes? Bureaucracy is bureaucracy, and I believe that the very idea of Swaraj is inconsistent with the existence of a bureaucracy. My ideal of Swaraj will never be satisfied unless the people co-operate with us in its attainment. Any other attempt will inevitably lead to what European Socialists call the 'bourgeois' government. In France and in England, and in other European countries, it is the middle-class who fought the battle of freedom, and the result is that power is still in the hands of this class. Having usurped the power, they are unwilling to part with it. If to-day the whole of Europe is

engaged in a battle of real freedom, it is because the nations of Europe are gathering their strength to wrest this power from the hands of the middle classes. I desire to avoid the repetition of that chapter of European history. It is for India to show the light to the world—Swaraj by non-violence and Swaraj by the people.”

Speaking in Calcutta in August, 1924, at the first general meeting of the Swaraj party, Chitta Ranjan gave another glimpse of his mind to his people in this matter in the following terms :

“ It is asked ‘ what is the kind of Swaraj that you are striving for ? ’ Some friends of mine are so anxious to have the details of Swaraj that in their attempt to define they lose sight of the real principle upon which the whole fight for Swaraj is based, and that is that we do not want any particular system of Government ; we want the right to establish our own system of government. That is the central idea of Swaraj. I have said elsewhere and repeat it to-day, that Swaraj—the right of Swaraj, is not to be confused with any particular system of Government. Systems of government come and go. Systems of government are established in one day, only to be broken another day, and another system is established upon the ashes of the old. What I want to-day is a clear declaration by the people of this country that we have got the right to establish our own system of government according to the temper and genius of our people. And we want that right to be recognized by our alien rulers.

“ Recently the question has, now and again, been raised within the Congress whether we should materialize our idea of Swaraj within the Empire or without it. In answering this question one thing is certain. We often hear of questions as to the kind of Swaraj, whether it will be within the Empire or outside the Empire, and questions are put with regard to that. I have often been interviewed by representatives of English newspapers upon that question. When they put that question to me, I always thought they had doubt in their minds that we were creating difficulties. But my ways are perfectly clear. I want my liberty ; I want my freedom ;

I want my right to establish our own system of government. If that is consistent with our being within the Empire, I have no objection to being within the Empire."

In his last public utterance at Faridpur (May 2nd, 1925) he made the following unequivocal statement :

" Indeed, the Empire idea gives us a vivid sense of many advantages. Dominion status to-day is in no sense servitude. It is essentially an alliance by consent of those who form part of the Empire for material advantages in the real spirit of co-operation. Free alliance necessarily carries with it the right of separation. Before the war, a separatist tendency was growing up in several parts of the Empire, but after the war, it is generally believed that it is only as a great confederation that the Empire or its component parts can live."

With Chitta Ranjan all sane and sober publicists and politicians will feel inclined to agree. It is generally conceded that the status of Dominion Home Rule or our connection with England is not to be the last word on the subject of our remote future political evolution. British rule may be held responsible for many of the evils of our present-day life—the abandonment of plain living and high thinking, our lost arts and industries, our enfeebled physique and incapacity to resist the germs of plague, cholera, malaria and hook-worm, the growing habit of living beyond our means, and the keen struggle to keep up an exaggerated standard of appearances, our intellectual dead level, our revolting ideas of private, and public, morality, our Penal Code, Evidence Act, and "lawyer government", and our divorce from the realities of an old-world life. But no one will deny that, working in so many different ways, and with such steadfast pertinacity, British rule has built up a nation here out of chaos and anarchy. It has dispelled the darkness, ignorance and superstition of centuries, and relaxed the galling conditions of domestic and social tyranny that had from the days of Manu onwards ground down the manhood of the race and weakened our social organism. It has taught us the inestimable blessings of liberty, freedom, social and political equality, and emancipated

our womenfolk and untouchable classes beyond recognition. It has turned vast arid tracts into fertile soil, waving with golden harvest, brought out untold treasures from the bosom of the earth for the service of men, and has connected one province with another with a network of railways, canals, and telegraph wires. It has, above everything, brought us into line with other civilized nations of the earth through the magic influence of a press, platform, and common laws and speech, and the widespread currency of common thoughts and aspirations. Whatever the character of the British Government be, and however culpable may have been its neglect of our interests, and whatever evils it may have wrought in India, it would be "satanic" to snap our connection with it.

And this must be recognized, that, if we keep our link with the British Empire, we are bound to march forward along with its future development, and to get to our goal with the least difficulty and within the shortest time. It is impossible to dip into a remote future and cast a long horoscope of India's political destiny. But, so far as our vision goes, we cannot think of a brighter, a more assured, and a more cheerful prospect for the Motherland than for her to march along with the other parts of the British Empire shoulder to shoulder to establish her position as an advanced modern State.

In this, and in the previous chapter, we have tried to place before our readers an accurate idea of the Indian demand for Swaraj, and the history of the genesis and inception of the mentality which has brought Indian political sentiments to a head. But before dealing with Chitta Ranjan's efforts to materialize his ideal of Swaraj it is necessary to take a bird's-eye view of the various attempts made by the Government from time to time to meet the political aspirations of the Indian intelligentsia.

## CHAPTER XI

### CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

PUBLIC memory is very short in most matters, particularly in matters of political and constitutional interest. There are few men in India to-day who remember, stage by stage, the initiation of responsible government which has been set in operation in this country.

We find the earliest anticipations of a self-governing and autonomous India in the writings and despatches of such experienced administrators as Elphinstone, Munro, Bentinck, and Metcalfe. They peeped into the future and saw the vision of a time when India would no longer care to be "governed" by foreigners. They felt and realized that it would be impossible for the English to retain a permanent control over the affairs of a dependency so far away from their own country. Many years later, Macaulay saw this vision in a clearer light. He realized that, with the spread of education and with the development of a sense of patriotism, India would resent being tied down to the chariot wheel of the Empire.

Speaking to a motion of Mr. Charles Grant, President of the Board of Control of the East India Company, on the second reading of the Bill for effecting an arrangement with the East India Company for the better government of His Majesty's Indian territories, Lord Macaulay made use of the following prophetic and wise words, on the floor of the House of Commons in July, 1833 :

"It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system ; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government ; that, having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand



European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or to retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history."

On the assumption of the responsibilities of the governance of India by the British Crown, Queen Victoria made a royal proclamation in which she proclaimed equal justice and citizenship to all her Indian subjects irrespective of caste, creed or race.

In 1862, four years after the suppression of the Mutiny and Queen Victoria's assumption of the sovereignty of India, a system of government through Councils was established, and non-official members were admitted into the Councils in the headquarters of the Government of India and in the various provinces for the discussion of public affairs. We say discussion because members were nominated only by the heads of the administrations and could take no more part than talk on the motions initiated by the official members. The "additional members" as the extra nominated members were then called, had no power to interpellate the Government on any public question, move any resolution, introduce any bill or vote on the budget. Yet this was the humble foundation upon which the present Indian constitution is based.

Speaking at Manchester, on the 11th of December, 1877, John Bright, one of the truest friends India ever had in England, made the following prophetic observation:

"I believe that it is our duty not only to govern India well now for our sakes and to satisfy our own conscience, but so to arrange its government and so to administer it that we should look forward to the time when India will have to take up her own government and administer it in her own fashion. I say he is no statesman—he is no man actuated with a high moral sense with regard to our great and terrible moral responsibility—who is not willing thus to look ahead, and thus to prepare for circumstances which may come sooner than we think, and sooner than any of us hope for, but which must come at some not very distant date."

Unfortunately, these observations of John Bright were not rightly comprehended or appreciated by the leaders of English political thought of his day, or by the heads of the Anglo-Indian administration out in this country either. The machinery of the Indian administration in mid-Victorian days ground neither small nor fast.

A few years after John Bright uttered the words we have just quoted, W. E. Gladstone, as the Premier of England, conceived the novel idea of sending a Roman Catholic peer as the Viceroy of a Protestant Sovereign to set matters right out in this country where the confidence of the people in the Anglo-Indian administration had been greatly shaken by the jingoistic character of Lord Lytton's viceroyalty. Lord Ripon conceived the idea of taking the people into his confidence in regard to certain public questions of the day. His scheme of local self-government was no doubt conceived in a spirit of great statesmanship, but unhappily the spirit of the statesman was effectively scotched by the intrigues of the administrator, when the details of the scheme came to be evolved and worked out. Though local self-government got a new start in India under Lord Ripon, it did not make much headway till quite recent times.

The early throes of the making of a new nation in India, however, first manifested themselves during the early years of Lord Ripon's viceroyalty. After repealing the Vernacular Press Act of Lord Lytton, his successor set his heart on removing one of the many distinctions which vitiated the Criminal Procedure Code of Sir FitzJames Stephen. Sir Courtney Ilbert, the Law Member of the Government of India under Lord Ripon, introduced a Bill into the Viceroy's Council during the closing session of 1882, for the removal of the disqualification of Indian magistrates for trying European offenders in criminal cases. The educated Indians of the day leapt with joy at this attempt of the new Viceroy and looked upon it as only a small instalment of a large debt of justice due to them. A large number of European residents of Calcutta, on the other hand, took fright at this attempt to remove the special privilege, which they had enjoyed since

the foundation of the Empire, of being tried by magistrates of their own race out in this country. Under the leadership of an eminent Calcutta barrister of the time, Mr. Branson, and a leading Calcutta merchant by the name of Mr. Keswick, and an Anglo-Indian journalist, Mr. Furrell, the Europeans made a dead set against the passage of this Bill through the Council.

At a meeting of the Town Hall these people urged that while Ilbert and Ripon had set their minds on removing only a sentimental grievance which rankled in the breast of a few "blatant Bengali babus" the practical result of their efforts would be to place their women-folk at the mercy of unsympathetic Indian magistrates. They urged that, "unlike Indian women, their women were not used to the foul multitudes of the Court", and they would all do their best to protect their women folk from being tried by "native magistrates". A third suggestion was made that the passage of the bill "would enable the jackass to kick the lion". The contemptuous and insulting references to the blatancy of Bengali babus, the libel on the character of their women, and the provoking comparison of the Bengali people to a jackass stirred the very depths of Indian society to an extent hitherto unparalleled in the history of British India. Assailing the comparison of the Indian people with the jackass, Lal Mohan Ghose, the most brilliant orator of Bengal after Keshab Chandra Sen, gave a pointed reply at a public meeting in Dacca on March 29th, 1883. "If this, indeed, were the case nothing could be more presumptuous or ridiculous. But even the jackass is not foolish enough to insult the majesty of the lion. But if the pitiful cur chooses to cover his recreant limbs with the borrowed hide of the lion, then I think the kick of the jackass is his only fitting punishment".

Such bad blood was created between the two peoples, that the leading Bengali solicitors of the day refused to send their briefs to Mr. Branson any more, and in a few months' time he was obliged to retire from the country.

In the meantime, a conspiracy was hatched by some of

the white residents of Calcutta to deport Lord Ripon out of India. At the end of this bitter feud, Lord Ripon and Sir Courtney Ilbert were obliged to withdraw the bill and enter into a concordat with the European opposition. It was agreed that Indian magistrates should henceforward be empowered to try European offenders, but only with the help of European jurors. The bill, therefore, was practically shelved, but for the first time it brought large classes of people together, and make a common stand for the defence of their rights and liberties. When Lord Ripon resigned in December, 1884, a send-off and farewell demonstration was arranged for him at Belgachia Villa in the northern suburbs of Calcutta, which was attended by thousands, as a token of their respect and gratitude for the retiring Viceroy.<sup>1</sup>

An ex-Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces was so surprised at this new demonstration of the popular will that he sought the hospitality of an Anglo-Indian journal for his views of the changed horizon, publishing them under the significant title, "If it be real what does it mean?"

In fact this changed outlook led only a year after, through the kindly efforts of Allan Octavian Hume,<sup>2</sup> to the establishment of the Indian National Congress, which met in Bombay for the first time in December, 1885,<sup>3</sup> under the presidency of W. C. Bonnerjee. It is amusing to recall that W. C. Bonnerjee—who to all intents and purposes lived the life of an Englishman and whose full name many Bengalis of his day hardly knew—had all his life ridiculed all sorts of political agitation, until he became a convert to the Nationalist ideas of his day by the fact of his having been brushed aside by the Government

<sup>1</sup> With the surplus of the money raised on this occasion, and with additional subscriptions collected at a later date, a marble statue was erected of this great Indian Viceroy and placed at the end of the Red Road in Calcutta in 1915.

<sup>2</sup> The first impulse towards the Indian National Congress was given by the publication, by Allan Octavian Hume, of two brilliant pamphlets under the titles of *Old Man's Hope* and *The Star in the East*.

<sup>3</sup> The first Congress was convened to be held in Poona at the suggestion of the late Mahadeo Govind Ranade, for a long time a judge of the Bombay High Court, and the founder of the Indian Social Conference. But owing to the outbreak of an epidemic of cholera the venue had to be changed to Bombay.

for the crime of being a "native", when the appointment of the Standing Counsel of the High Court of Calcutta fell vacant.

At its inception and during its first two years, the Indian National Congress flourished under gubernatorial patronage and basked in official sunshine. At the end of the second Congress in Calcutta, a large number of the delegates were treated to an afternoon party at Government House. Next year, fortunately for the Congress, Lord Dufferin fell out with Allan Octavian Hume, the inspirer and founder of the movement, and India was treated to an exhibition of viceregal temper in a notorious after-dinner speech at the St. Andrew's Dinner, 1888, the memory of which lingers to this day.

In this speech among other things Lord Dufferin said :

" And some gentlemen—some intelligent, loyal, patriotic and well-meaning men are desirous of taking, I will not say a further step in advance, but a very big jump into the unknown—by the application to India of democratic methods of government and the adoption of a Parliamentary system which England herself has only reached by slow degrees and through the discipline of many centuries of preparations. The ideal authoritatively suggested, as I understand, is the creation of a representative body or bodies in which the official element shall be in a minority, who shall have what is called the power of the purse, and who, through this instrumentality, shall be able to bring the British Executive into subjection to their will. The organization of battalions of native militia and volunteers for the internal and external defence of a country is the next arrangement suggested, and the first practical result to be obtained would be the reduction of the British Army to one-half of its present number.

" Well, gentlemen, I am afraid that the people of England will not readily be brought to the acceptance of this programme, or to allow such an assembly or a number of such assemblies either to interfere with its armies or to fetter and circumscribe the liberty of action either of the provincial governments or of the supreme executive. In the first

place, the whole scheme is eminently unconstitutional, for the essence of constitutional government is that responsibility and power should remain in the same hands, and the idea of irresponsible Councils, whose members could never be called to account for their acts in the way in which an opposition can be called to account in a constitutional country, arresting the march of Indian legislation or nullifying the policy of the British executive, in India, would be regarded as an impracticable anomaly. . . .

“ Who and what are the persons who seek to assume such great powers—to tempt the fate of Phæthon, and to sit in the chariot of the sun ? Well, they are gentlemen of whom I desire to speak with the greatest courtesy and kindness, for they are most of them the product of the system of education which we ourselves have carried on during the last thirty years.

“ I would ask them how could any reasonable man imagine that the British Government would be content to allow this microscopic minority to control the administration of that majestic and multiform Empire, for whose safety and welfare they are responsible in the eyes of God and before the face of civilization ?

“ Well, gentlemen, as I have already observed, when the Congress was first started, it seemed to me that such a body, if they directed their attention with patriotic zeal to the consideration of these and cognate subjects (sanitation, emigration, establishment of manufacturing industries, social reform, etc.), as similar congresses do in England, might prove of assistance to the government and of great use to their fellow citizens. I cannot help expressing my regret that they should seem to consider such momentous subjects, concerning as they do the welfare of millions of their fellow subjects, as beneath their notice, and that they should have concerned themselves instead with matters in regard to which their assistance is likely to be less profitable to us.

"It is still a greater matter of regret to me that the members of the Congress should have become answerable for the distribution, as their officials have boasted, among thousands and thousands of ignorant and credulous men, of publications animated by a very questionable spirit, and whose manifest intention is to excite the hatred of the people against the public servants of the Crown in the country. Such proceedings as these no Government could regard with indifference, nor can they fail to inspire it with misgivings, at all events of the wisdom of those who have so offended. Nor is the silly threat of one of the chief officers, the principal Secretary,<sup>1</sup> I believe, of the Congress, that he and his Congress friends hold in their hands keys not only of a popular insurrection but of a military revolt, calculated to restore our confidence in their discretion, even when accompanied by the assurance that they do not intend for the present to put these keys into the locks."

This opened a new chapter in the history of the Congress, and from 1888 on to the beginning of the present century, no end of ridicule and banter was poured over it. In Parliament, long before the last century drew to an end, Mr. (afterwards Earl) Goschen went out of his way to throw out a very broad hint that the Congress was being fed and financed practically by Russian roubles, and in India, between Sir Auckland Colvin and the late Rajah of Benares, Sir Syed Ahmed of Aligarh, Odey Pretap Singh of Bhinga, Rajah Siva Prasad and their worthy lieutenants, an impression was widely created in the public and official mind that the Congress was a very disloyal and seditious movement, and an organ of Hindu public opinion only.

This attitude of distrust was reflected in the deliberations of the Congress itself and was followed by the secession from it of practically the whole of the Mahomedan community. As a result, the main attention of this body was for several years concentrated on no more serious work than protesting against legislative measures and animadverting upon

<sup>1</sup> Allan Octavian Hume.

bureaucratic rule and official high-handedness, thus turning the Congress into a weak opposition of Her Majesty's Government in the country. The Presidents of the Congress for this period seldom looked far ahead or concerned themselves with any constructive programme of work, far less had any thought to the real work of nation-building. They contented themselves with bitterly declaiming against the reactionary and repressive spirit of the administration, and with criticizing none too mildly all anti-popular legislative enactments. There were, however, exceptions to this, as George Yule (Allahabad, 1888), Ananda Mohan Bose (Madras, 1898), Sir Henry Cotton (Bombay, 1904) and Gopal Krishna Gokhale (Benares, 1905) who introduced into their speeches other matters which will be read with attention and respect by all students of Indian politics for a long time to come.<sup>1</sup> In reviewing the administration of Lords Dufferin, Lansdowne and Elgin, Ananda Mohan Bose pertinently asked the Government if they were moving "backwards or forwards", and speaking in a plaintive voice and with great apostolic fervour, he drew the attention of his audience to our failure to rise equal to the call of our Motherland. There was scarcely a dry eye in the hall when he made his concluding observations on love, sacrifice and service. The speech of Sir (then Mr.) Surendra Nath Banerjea at Poona on 1895, and of Sir (then Mr.) Sankaran Nair at Amraoti in 1897, were also very notable utterances, the first for its oratorical flourishes and brilliant delivery, and the latter for its quiet strength and incisive criticism.

This chapter in the history of the Congress was continued till December, 1906, when Dadabhoy Naoroji for the first time laid down *Swaraj* as the ideal of the Congress. Over this word "*Swaraj*", and the various interpretations that were sought to be put upon this ideal, Congressmen in India split themselves up into the moderate and the extremist wings and then came to blows at Surat in 1907. It is believed that a few months before the Congress met at Surat,

<sup>1</sup> In 1905, at Benares, a resolution supporting the boycott of British goods was first adopted by the Indian National Congress.



Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Chitta Ranjan Das were concerting measures between themselves to overthrow the domination of the Liberal Party in that national movement. Failing to devise any better way of gaining their objective, Tilak and his lieutenants at Surat took the unusual step of opposing the election of Rash Behary Ghose as its President. Hitherto the election of the President of the Congress was only a formal affair, the Congress being required to do nothing more than ratify the nominations of the majority of the provincial Congress Committees. Tilak wanted to depart from this procedure and asked the Congress to choose its own President and not to accept the nomination of the Provincial Congress Committees. It is stated that Tilak and his friends wanted to put Lala Lajput Rai into the chair, and in case of his refusal, either Surendra Nath Banerjea, or Aswini Kumar Dutt. To this a bitter opposition was at once raised, and Tilak's friends made a frantic effort to break up the Congress. Chairs were hurled from the platform to the auditorium, and a Mahratta slipper was hurled from the auditorium at Dr. Rash Behary Ghose in the chair. The police at once entered the Congress pavilion to restore order and dispersed the Congress. This was the beginning of a new chapter in the history of that movement, and the Liberal Party, by skilful manœuvres and by the adoption of new rules through a convention established by them, were able to keep the extremist section at arm's length for some years. The leaders of the congress up to this time had been such men as Feroze Shah Mehta, W. C. Bonnerjee, Surendra Nath Banerjea, Gopal Krishna Gokhale,<sup>1</sup> Ananda Mohan Bose, and for some time

<sup>1</sup> Gopal Krishna Gokhale joined the Congress early in the nineties as the most trusted lieutenant of M. G. Ranade. A very untoward event happened in 1897, when he was practically hounded out of the Congress for a time. In that year, the Plague Regulations were enforced in the city of Poona with great rigour and severity, and, in his first visit to England this year, where he had gone to give evidence before the Welby Commission he informed Sir William Wedderburn that in one or two cases the modesty of some Indian women had been outraged by an officer in charge of the Regulations. Sir William made use of this statement in the House of Commons, but the Secretary of State (Lord George Hamilton) at once challenged it, and Sir William had to tender an apology for having made an unfounded statement. When Gokhale returned to India about the end of the year, a high police official boarded his steamer in Bombay, and

Pundit Ayodhya Nath of Allahabad, Krishnaswamy Iyer of Madras, and Lala Buxi Ram of Lahore.

From 1908 to 1914, the Congress passed through a stage of great depression, the two wings of the Nationalist Party remaining separated all this time by internal dissensions. The address delivered by Pundit Bishen Narayan Dar, as the President of the twenty-sixth Congress in Calcutta (1911), reflected in a very able and pointed manner the disappointment and bitterness of the educated community in India over the halting character of the Morley-Minto Reforms and the unwisdom of the policy of repression-cum-conciliation started by Lord Morley.

At Bankipur and at Karachi (1912 and 1913), the Congress had very uneventful sessions and went on in a very humdrum way ; and when it met for the twenty-ninth session at Madras, the European war had broken out and the attitude of our people appeared to have dispelled English distrust of the loyalty of the Indians.

The late Bhupendra Nath Basu availed himself of this opportunity to introduce a very refreshing departure in the spirit of his Presidential Address at Madras in December, 1914, and raised for the first time a cry for self-government in this country and a satisfactory adjustment of the relation of India with the British Empire. For the first time in the history of the Congress, controversial politics and discussion of administrative and legislative measures were practically set aside in the inaugural Address of the President, and an altogether higher plane was reached— by mentioning India's

wanted him either to substantiate his statement or to tender an apology to Government. It appears that this unusual procedure quite put Gokhale out, and he felt compelled to tender the apology asked for. When a few days later, he appeared on the platform of the Amraoti Congress, which was then being held under the presidency of Mr. (now Sir) Sankaran Nair, he was hissed and hooted. After this disgrace he kept away from the Congress for a few years, until he became a member of the Indian Legislative Council and had made his mark as perhaps the most fearless and independent critic of the Government. By 1903, Gokhale had emerged as one of the most trusted leaders of the Indian people, and, in 1905, was called upon to preside over the Benares session of the Indian National Congress. A few months later, he founded the " Servants of India Society ", of which the Rt. Hon. Srinivasan Sastri was subsequently the head till his appointment as the Agent of the Government of India in South Africa.

participation in the world war and her contributions towards it in men and money. This also gave him an opportunity of declaiming against the anomaly of the position of the Indians remaining as equal subjects of the Sovereign, but unequal citizens of the State. At this Congress also, the proposals for a compromise between the right and the left wings of the Nationalist Party reached a definite stage and were referred to a Committee. Nor were signs wanting for a complete *rapprochement* between the two great communities of the Indian people—the Hindus and the Mahomedans. The session of 1914 was the end of the period of depression, and it was felt by most Congressmen who attended it, that a new chapter of its history would open with its thirtieth session in Bombay in December, 1915.

The expectations of Congressmen in 1914 were more than realized in the Congress of 1915. Not only were the two main wings of the Nationalist Party reconciled to each other by a happy compromise, but for the first time in the history of India the Hindus and Mahomedans met on a common political platform to work out their common destiny, thus giving the Congress a truly representative and national character. Truly was this Congress described by one of its ex-Presidents as "the first Congress of the New Era, of the New India—the India of the young, of the hopeful, of the energetic". And to crown all, there was the unique message of its President which, for boldness and conception, courage of expression, and statesman-like wisdom, will remain for a long time as one of the most remarkable utterances of new India.

Sir Satyendra Prasanna Sinha (now Lord Sinha) summed up our political ideal in one word—self-government—but, unlike most of our public men, he kept us neither in the dark nor in doubt as to what exactly he understood by this word. While there had been a good deal of wobbling over "self-government", Lord Sinha defined his own idea of it by quoting President Lincoln's famous dictum—"government of the people, for the people, by the people". By "government" again, Lord Sinha did not mean the civil administration



SATYENDRA PRASANNA SINHA  
(Lord Sinha of Raipur)

The first Indian member of the Viceroy's Executive Council  
and the first Indian peer of the British realm  
Born 1864

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and the legislative function of the State only, as is generally understood by the bulk of our people, but all its controlling agencies, "civil as well as military, executive as well as legislative, administrative as well as judicial". Into Lord Sinha's scheme of self-government, military control and "the nationalization of the army" entered as effectively as popular control over legislation and administration. The question of enlistment and commissions in the Army, with their logical corollaries of universal volunteering and the removal of the hard provisions of the Arms Act, were as much practical 'politics to Lord Sinha as the separation of the judicial and executive functions' which the Indian National Congress had insistently demanded for the better part of a generation. In the earlier periods of the Congress, we had prayed and agitated for the expansion of the Legislative Councils, for the establishment of simultaneous examination of the Indian Civil Service out in this country as well as in England, and for the repeal of this Act and that, and this was not very unjustly described by the more ardent spirits of the Congress as a "mendicant policy"; latterly, we pressed for the full and satisfactory development of local self-government and further control and share in the actual administration of the country. In the thirtieth session of the Congress, the President put forward no detached and isolated claim for this or that privilege, this or that right, the abrogation of this Act or that, but the all-inclusive claim of control, by the Indians themselves, "over civil as well as military, executive as well as legislative, administrative as well as judicial" branches of the Government.

We have so far taken a bird's-eye view of the history of the Congress from its start in 1885 to the end of its thirtieth

<sup>1</sup> Monomohan Ghose brought this question prominently before the public in and outside the Congress by his insistent demand for the separation of these two functions for the purity of administration of justice. He died of apoplexy in October, 1896, in his country house at Krishnagar while replying to a wild attack on him by an Anglo-Indian writer in the *Asiatic Quarterly Review*. The late Monomohan Ghose, the greatest criminal lawyer of his day in Calcutta, exposed, for the first time, by the publication of two pamphlets, several very notable cases of miscarriage of justice due to the combination of these two functions in civilian officers in British India.

session in Bombay in 1915. During all this period, the history of the Congress is linked up *pari passu* with the history of our constitutional development. The influence and pressure of the Congress acted and re-acted all this time on the policy of the Government. It will, therefore, be necessary to take a similar bird's-eye view of the various stages of policy initiated by the Government of this country to meet and counteract the demands of the people, uttered through the Congress.

While Lord Dufferin poured forth his anathemas on this nascent institution at the notorious St. Andrew's 'Dinner at Calcutta, he at the same time had written a very strong despatch to the Secretary of State for India conceding in a large measure the claims of the Congress for the enlargement of the constitution and powers of the various legislative Councils of India. Charles Bradlaugh, the great Parliamentary fighter of the last century, came out to India in 1889 to attend the Congress, and, in collaboration with some of the leaders, drew up an outline for the reconstitution of the Indian Councils which he enlarged into a bill and introduced on his return to England. Very soon after the introduction of this bill in the House of Commons, it had to be withdrawn, and a new bill, initiated by Lord Cross, then Secretary of State for India, was put in its place and got through the House of Commons with the blessings of Gladstone.

The Indian Councils Act of 1891 failed, however, to satisfy the aspirations of the Indian National Congress. The main change introduced by Lord Cross's Act was that for the first time the principle of election was introduced into the constitution of the provincial councils. The right of interpellation and moving resolutions and discussing the Budget also formed principal features of the new amendment. Similar advances were also made in regard to the Indian Legislative Council. ➤

When Lord Lansdowne's viceroyalty was coming to a close, an extraordinary event happened which indicated beyond doubt how seriously Indian public opinion was being taken by some Europeans at the time. Mr. Gladstone had nominated Sir Henry Norman, an officer with an established

military reputation, as Lansdowne's successor, but because of this very feature of his life the nomination of Norman to the viceroyalty of India was opposed in the columns of a leading Indian newspaper of Calcutta.<sup>1</sup> Norman took this as a hint that he was not wanted by the people of India, and immediately withdrew. Thereupon the choice of Gladstone fell on Lord Elgin, a Scotch peer of very mediocre reputation and talents. Lord Elgin's viceroyalty was sterile, but his successor's proved the beginning of a new chapter of viceregal stewardship. Lord Curzon came to India in 1899 as the prophet of a new policy which we have described at length in another chapter.

In November, 1805, Lord Minto had replaced Lord Curzon as Viceroy, and in December Lord Morley became the Secretary of State for India. Between these two, they appointed a Committee, consisting of Sir Denzil Ibbetson, Mr. Earle Richards, and Mr. Edward Baker, the Home Member, the Law Member and the Finance Member of the then Government of India respectively, to consider, among other matters, the increase in the representative element in the Indian and Provincial Legislative Councils. The result of their enquiry is writ large in what is now known as the Morley-Minto scheme.

We are not concerned in this brief resumé with the period of Indian history between 1891 and 1909, in which latter year Lord Morley, in concert with the Viceroy, Lord Minto, made a further advance towards the popularization of the various Indian Legislative Councils. In this advance, they were not aiming at responsible or parliamentary government in any way, as will appear from the following extract from a famous despatch of Lord Morley to the Indian Viceroy.

"Your Excellency's disclaimer for your Government of being advocates of representative government for India in the Western sense of the term is not any more than was to be expected. Some of the most powerful advocates of the representative system in Europe have learned and taught from Indian experiences of their own that, in Your Excellency's

<sup>1</sup> *The Indian Mirror*, then edited by Mr. Narendra Nath Sen.



words, 'it could never be akin to the instincts of the many races comprising the population of the Indian Empire.' One reason among many is suggested by the statement in the portion of your despatch dealing with local Governments, that 'Indian gentlemen of position ordinarily refuse to offer themselves as candidates to a wide electorate, partly because they dislike canvassing, and partly by reason of their reluctance to risk the indignity of being defeated by a rival candidate of inferior social status'. While repudiating the intention of desire to attempt the transplantation of any European form of representative government on Indian soil, what is sought by Your Excellency in Council is to improve existing machinery, or to find new, for 'recognizing the natural aspirations of educated men to share in the government of their country'. I need not say that in this design you have the cordial concurrence of His Majesty's Government. One main standard and test for all who have a share in guiding Indian Policy, whether at Whitehall or Calcutta, is the effect of whatever new proposal may at any time be made upon the strength and steadiness of the paramount power. In Indian government there is no grace worth having in what is praised as a concession and no particular virtue in satisfying an aspiration, unless your measures at the same time fortify the basis of authority on which peace and order and all the elements of the public good in India depend. In the whole spirit of Your Excellency's despatch I read the conviction that every one of the proposals advanced in it is calculated by enlisting fresh support in common opinion on the one hand, and on the other by bringing government into closer touch with that opinion, and all the currents of need and feeling pervading it, to give new confidence and a wider range of knowledge, ideas, and sympathies, to the holders of executive power."

The Morley-Minto scheme only increased the size of the Councils and reinforced them with a larger leaven of elected members, and also introduced for the first time an Indian member in all the executive councils of the Empire. This new scheme, though it received the blessing of Gopal

Krishna Gokhale and the qualified support of the Indian National Congress of the time, also failed to meet popular demands, and criticisms again began to be freely and frequently levelled against the Reforms—again on the grounds of their inadequacy and insufficiency. It was not only the leaders of the Congress and the nationalist movement in this country that considered the Morley-Minto Reforms as inadequate and insufficient, but responsible statesmen at the helm of Indian affairs soon came to share this view.

The interesting position created by the Morley-Minto changes was excellently brought out in the following comments.<sup>1</sup>

“ We must make up our minds either to rule ourselves or to let the people rule : there is no half-way house, except of course on the highway of deliberate transition. At present, we are doing neither. We are trying to govern by concession, and each successive concession has the air of being wrung from us. We keep public business going by bargaining and negotiation : not, however, the healthy bargaining of the market place, but a steady yielding to assaults which always leave some bitterness behind on both sides. This is in no sense the fault of individuals ; it follows inevitably from the influences at work. Up to Lord Curzon’s viceroyalty, there was a sturdy determination to do what was right for India, whether India altogether liked it or not. The reforms which followed his régime brought in a power of challenge and obstruction— influence without responsibility ; and, rather than fight, we have often to give way. We are shedding the rôle of benevolent despotism and the people specially those who are most friendly to us—cannot understand what rôle we mean to assume in its place. We are accordingly losing their confidence, and, with it, some of our power for good. If we returned to sheer despotism, we should carry many of the people with

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in the *Report on Constitutional Reforms*, p. 66.

us, and should secure an ordered calm. But that being impossible, we must definitely show that we are moving from the Eastern to the Western ideal of rule. And, secondly, we must maintain the full weight and order of government while the move is going on. Otherwise, we cannot look for either internal peace or the co-operation of the people, or indeed for anything else except growing weakness with the fatal consequence that weakness involves in an Eastern country."

Addressing a large number of representative Europeans at the United Service Club of Simla in October, 1915, Lord Hardinge made the following notable pronouncement :

" England has instilled into this country the culture and civilization of the West with all its ideals of liberty and self-respect. It is not enough for her now to consider only the material outlook of India. It is necessary for her to cherish the aspirations, of which she has herself sown the seed, and English officials are gradually awakening to the fact that high as were the aims and remarkable the achievements of their predecessors, a still nobler task lies before them in the present and the future in guiding the uncertain and faltering steps of Indian development along sure and safe paths. The new rôle of guide, philosopher and friend is opening before you, and it is worthy of your greatest efforts. It requires in you gifts of imagination and sympathy, and imposes upon you self-sacrifice, for it means that slowly but surely you must divest yourselves of some of the power you have hitherto wielded. Let it be realized that great as has been England's mission in the past, she has a far more glorious task to fulfil in the future, in encouraging and guiding the political self-development of the people. The goal to which India may attain is still distant, and there may be many vicissitudes in her path, but I look forward with confidence to a time when strengthened by character and self-respect, and bound by ties of

- affection and gratitude, India may be regarded as a true friend of the Empire and not merely as a trusty dependent. The day for the complete fulfilment of this ideal is not yet, but it is to this distant vista that
- the British official should turn his eyes, and he must grasp the fact that it is by his future success in this direction that British prestige and efficiency will be judged."

Three months after this inspiring pronouncement was made by the head of the Government of India at Simla, the Viceroy was confronted with the notable utterance of Lord Sinha in Bombay, when he insisted on a declaration of the Government's policy and purpose.

For the first time, the address of a President of the Indian National Congress was taken quite seriously by the Government, and Lord Hardinge opened a long correspondence with the Secretary of State for India as to how far Lord Sinha's proposals could be given effect to, and in what direction a new scheme of Indian reforms might be canvassed. It is understood that the tentative proposals submitted by the Government of Lord Hardinge to his Majesty's Secretary of State at Whitehall in this connection were returned to Simla on the ground of their inadequacy and insufficiency and for full reconsideration. The Government of India were for a long time unable to make up their mind as to what form the new scheme should take, though they were not unwilling to set out in definite terms the purpose and goal of British rule in India as desired by Lord Sinha.

The European War at this time had taken a rather acute and anxious turn, and the fortunes of the Allies were still hanging in the balance, and India's help in men and money was brought under an ever-pressing requisition at every stage of this crisis. It was at this time that a representative of India was wanted by Mr. Asquith (now Lord Oxford), then the Premier of England, to help the Imperial Conference in London with advice and information, thus raising India at once from the position of a trusted dependency to the position

of almost an equal partnership. This step went a long way in winning people's confidence, but it did not mark any notable advance in the constitutional history of India. The Indian constitution remained to be reformed, in spite of India's almost equal partnership in the Imperial concern.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain, who succeeded Lord Crewe as the Secretary of State for India, had, by this time, made up his mind to risk some sort of declaration. When things had arrived at this stage, the newly-elected members of the Viceroy's Legislative Council met at Simla and drafted a Memorandum on the subject which was submitted to the new Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, early in October, 1916. The Memorandum is a historic document of considerable importance as being the basis of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme and deserves very careful perusal at the hands of every student of the question of our constitutional development. This document has now passed into contemporary historical literature as "The Nineteen Members' Memorandum."<sup>1</sup> The Maharaja of Kasimbazar, the most patriotic and generous nobleman of Bengal, headed the list of the signatories to this document, and among others who signed it were Sir Dinshaw Wacha, the late Bhupendra Nath Basu, Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Rt. Hon. Srinivasan Sastri, Dr. Tej B. Sapru, Sir B. N. Sarma, and the late Rai Bahadur Krishna Sahai of Bihar.

Three months after this the Indian National Congress met at Lucknow and gave most of its attention to this question of Indian devolution. After two days of anxious deliberation, the Congress adopted a very lengthy resolution, closely following the suggestions made in the "Nineteen Members' Memorandum", and drawing up a scheme of Council representation to suit the aspiration of the two leading communities of India, the Hindus and the Mahomedans. This very scheme was adopted almost bodily at the annual meeting of the Indian Moslem League which also met at Lucknow in the same month.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix E.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix F.

In February, 1917, Mr. Lionel Curtis, who was travelling in India at the time as a representative of the "Round Table" group of political students, arrived in Delhi and conferred with several members of the Indian Legislative Council as to the merits of the Congress-League scheme and suggested some alternative propositions. Mr. Lionel Curtis was one of the earliest critics to detect in the Congress-League scheme potentialities of administrative deadlocks and insurmountable friction, and developed the idea of government which subsequently came to be called by the late Sir William Meyer "Dyarchy". It may be mentioned here that this new scheme was not very kindly received by Indian politicians as Mr. Lionel Curtis was a "suspect" in the Nationalist camp at that time because a letter of his in connection with the idea of a federal commonwealth for the British Empire had been mercilessly misinterpreted and criticized in the Congress at Lucknow. Exception was also taken to the fact that no such experiment had ever been tried in any part of the world before, and was altogether a novel idea in the sphere of government.

About the beginning of the year 1917, Mrs. Annie Besant started a new propaganda under the cry of "Home Rule". She started in Madras a Home Rule League with the late Dr. Subramaniya Iyer, a retired Judge of the High Court, as President, and in the course of a few weeks all the theosophical organizations controlled by Mrs. Besant took up the idea very warmly and helped to establish branches of this League all over the country. Mrs. Besant went to such extremes that the Government of Lord Chelmsford was obliged to yield to the pressure of the local Government of Madras, and interned her with two of her associates<sup>1</sup>. As soon as Mrs. Besant was interned, a violent agitation was set on foot to get her out of her internment, on the one hand, and convert the Home Rule propaganda into a bitter anti-British agitation, on the other. Public indignation rose so high in the matter that it was arranged to elect her as the President of the Indian National Congress, which was to meet

<sup>1</sup> Messrs. G. S. Arundel and B. P. Wadia.

that year in Calcutta, and, in view of her internment, it was seriously proposed to keep the presidential chair of the Congress vacant, and to get the business of the Session done through a Deputy-President. Over the election of the President of this session, Congressmen in Bengal fell out amongst themselves, thus making a second and a very serious cleavage and schism in the ranks of the Congress. Chitta Ranjan Das now openly came out and joined the extreme party to widen the gulf. In the meantime Mrs. Besant was released and was elected President by the unanimous vote of all the provincial Congress Committees. This was the starting point of the creation of a new party in India, which very soon developed as the Moderate and, later, as the Liberal Party, and this was also the first Congress at which the elder statesmen of the country lost their control over deliberations.

Nothing, however, of much importance happened, until the 20th of August, 1917, when the late E. S. Montagu, His Majesty's new Secretary of State for India, made the following announcement in Parliament :

“ The policy of His Majesty's Government with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the Administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps in this direction shall be taken as soon as possible, and that it is of the highest importance as a preliminary to considering what these steps should be that there should be a free and informal exchange of opinion between those in authority at home and in India. His Majesty's Government have accordingly decided, with His Majesty's approval, that I should accept the Viceroy's invitation to proceed to India and to discuss these matters with the Viceroy and the Government of India, to consider with the

- Viceroy the views of local Governments, and to receive with him the suggestions of representative bodies and others. . . . I would add that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The
- British Government and the Government of India, on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples, must be judges of the time and measure of each advance, and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility. . . . Ample opportunity will be afforded for discussion of the proposals, which will be submitted in due course to Parliament."

In pursuance of this authoritative declaration from Parliament, a mission came out to India with Mr. Montagu at its head, to draw up a scheme of constitutional changes to meet the requirements of the Indian political situation. This mission arrived in India in November, 1917, and began work at Delhi, visiting in turn Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, and receiving deputations at each of these places, of all schools of political thought, and giving interviews to men representing all shades of opinion. This mission, which consisted, besides the late Mr. Montagu, of Lord Donoughmore, the late Sir William Duke, the late Bupendra Nath Basu and Mr. Charles Roberts, was in constant consultation throughout the enquiry with the members of the Government of India, and, on its return to Delhi, a continuous series of conferences began ; there were meetings of the Secretary of State and those associated with him and the Government of India, meetings with all the heads of provinces ; meetings with a Committee of the Ruling Princes ; meetings of committees to consider details and frequent private interviews and informal discussions. When the mission came to Calcutta, Chitta Ranjan Das went up as a witness before it, and adumbrated an advanced scheme of national self-rule. After six months



of hard work, the Report was signed at Simla by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State on April 22nd, 1918, and was published in June with the assent of His Majesty's Government in England.

The first part of the Report consisted of an exhaustive survey of the situation which had demanded the new order of things in India, and the second part of proposals for the reconstruction of the government of the Country based on the co-operation of the people to meet the needs of the more spacious days to come. The first part is euphemistically described in the Report as the "Material", and sets forth the case for Reforms at very considerable length.

The "Material" portion of the Report is couched in very high and dignified language and contains political sentiments which would do credit to an Edmund Burke. Outside some well-known despatches of Munro, Bentinck, Elphinstone, James Mill and Macaulay, one could hardly meet with such lofty sentiments as the following :

"We believe profoundly that the time has now come when the sheltered existence which we have given India cannot be prolonged without grave damage to her national life; that we have a richer inheritance for her people than any that we have yet bestowed on them; that nationhood within the Empire represents something better than anything India has hitherto attained; that the placid, pathetic contentment of the masses is not the soil on which such Indian nationhood will grow and that in deliberately disturbing it we are working for her highest good."

Again :

"Self-Government for India within the Empire is the highest aim which her people can set before themselves or which, as trustees for her, we can help her to attain. Without it, there can be no fullness of civic life, no satisfaction of the natural aspirations which fill the soul of every self-respecting man. The vision is one that may well lift men up to resolve on things that seemed impossible before."

The second part, entitled "The Proposals", practically left the Government of India very much where it was, and recommended for the provincial Governments a system of advance based on the principle of "Dyarchy", rejecting altogether, as unworkable, the Congress-<sup>1</sup>ague Scheme.<sup>1</sup>

The Report lays down four main formulæ which run thus :

(i.) There should be, as far as possible, complete popular control in local bodies, and the largest possible independence for them of outside control.

(ii.) The provinces are the domain in which the earliest steps towards the progressive realization of responsible government should be taken. Some measure of responsibility should be given at once, and our aim is to give complete responsibility as soon as conditions permit. This involves at once giving the provinces the largest measure of independence—legislative, administrative and financial—of the Government of India, which is compatible with the due discharge by the latter of its own responsibilities.

(iii.) The Government of India must remain wholly responsible to Parliament, and saving such responsibility its authority in essential matters must remain indisputable pending experience of the effect of the changes now to be introduced in the provinces. In the meantime, the Indian Legislative Council should be enlarged and made more representative and its opportunities of influencing Government increased.

(iv.) In proportion as the foregoing changes take effect, the control of Parliament and the Secretary of State over the Government of India and Provincial Government must be relaxed.

In accordance with the spirit of these formulæ, definite proposals were laid down for starting the provinces of India on the road to responsible government with the prospect of

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix F.

winning their way to the ultimate goal, their prospect hindered, it may be, "at times by hills and rough places, but finding the road nowhere swept away by floods or landslides."

The Report sincerely wanted a foreign bureaucracy to change its heart and the Indian Civil Service to step aside from its position as the executive arm of the State, and assume for the future the rôle of "onlooker and friendly adviser". It was also anxious to invest the local Councils with a certain degree of responsibility, a savour that the Morley-Minto Councils wholly lacked. It was further proposed in the Report to free the Provincial Legislative Councils to a very large extent from their irksome bondage to the Central Government, and to confer upon them some amount of financial, administrative, and executive independence, and make them in some measure the sole and ultimate arbiters of their own destinies. As a measure of devolution based on dyarchy some of the functions of the provincial governments were proposed to be reserved for administration by the Governors-in-Council and some transferred to the charge of ministers who would be appointed by the Governors and responsible to the local Councils. The Legislative Councils it was proposed to enlarge with a very considerable leaven of elected members, and the proposals of the Congress-League Scheme, regarding the proportion of Hindu and Mahomedan members in the various Councils of the Empire, were accepted. The provincial legislatures were to consist of unicameral houses with a complicated and involved suggestion for Grand Committees to meet emergent situations. The Government of India was left wholly responsible to the Secretary of State and Parliament, while a suggestion was put forward to enlarge the Councils at Simla and Delhi and to introduce a greater Indian element into the Viceroy's Executive Council. It was definitely held in this Report that the time had not yet come when the Central Government might undergo much change without inviting danger and loss of efficiency, and its liberalization might be left at a stage where it could only be responsive "to a succession of stimuli from outside". In the matter

of the Imperial Legislature, the Report wanted to divide it into two houses, but not exactly after the fashion of bi-cameral legislatures in other parts of the world.

When the Report was published, it was received in various moods by the politically-minded classes in India. While a section of Indian Nationalists gave a warm-hearted reception to the broad principles and recommendations laid down in the Report, another section considered it wholly unsatisfactory and disappointing. Mrs. Besant, then an outstanding personality and a recognized leader among Indian Nationalists, considered the proposals "ungenerous for England to offer and unworthy for India to accept". The Anglo-Indian Press were fairly startled and up in arms against what they considered to be nothing short of revolutionary changes. An acute controversy arose over the proposals of the Report in all parts of India, and a special session of the Indian National Congress was convened for August, 1918, in Bombay, to discuss them in detail. In this special session as well as in the annual one held at Delhi at the close of the year, the Nationalist Party condemned unequivocally the whole range of the Montford Scheme. On this occasion the Moderates frankly broke away from the extreme wing of the Nationalist Party and organized themselves into a distinct Party as they could not see their way to condemn the proposed reforms lock, stock and barrel. The Anglo-Indians also had awakened to their peculiar position and were anxious to have their place in the new order of things duly recognized.

The Congress having now passed its verdict on the Viceroy's and the Secretary of State's report on constitutional development, Mr. Montagu waited for the considered opinion of the Indian Legislative Council to enable him to gauge correctly how far India was prepared to accept their scheme. On the 6th of September, 1918, Surendra Nath Banerjee moved the following resolution on Constitutional Reforms in the Indian Legislative Council. "This Council, while thanking His Excellency the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India for the Reform proposals, and recognizing

them as a genuine effort and a definite advance towards the progressive realization of responsible government in India, recommends to the Governor-General in Council that a Committee consisting of all the non-official members of this Council be appointed to consider the Reforms Report and make recommendations to the Government of India." Surendra Nath Banerjea wanted a non-official Committee to enable the elected and nominated members of the Council to discuss the Reform proposals with an open mind and without being prejudiced by official frowns or favour, and unaided by official advice and guidance. Mr. V. J. Patel,<sup>1</sup> member for Bombay, objected to the whole of this motion being put to the vote in a lump, as the first portion was difficult for the Extremist party to support, and the second they could not object to. On Sir William Vincent, then the Home Member of the Government of India, approving of the idea, Lord Chelmsford, who was presiding over the meeting, divided Surendra Nath Banerjea's resolutions into two parts to accommodate Mr. Patel and his friends, and put each part separately to the vote of the Council. In the first part forty-six voted for and two against, the two being Mr. Patel and a Member from Madras. On the second portion there were forty-eight "Ayes" and two "Noes", the noes being the European representatives of the Bengal and Bombay mercantile communities. When the Reform Schemes were considered by the Committee of Surendra Nath Banerjea they came out practically unscathed, thus putting heart into Mr. Montagu to go on with his scheme. It is evident that if the Council like the Congress had gone against the Montford Scheme, it would have been impossible for Mr. Montagu to go to Parliament with any Bill at all, and the whole of the Reform Scheme would have been hung up for many a long day. But emboldened by the strong support of the Indian Legislative Council and subsequently reassured by the first session of the Liberal Federation in Bombay in November under the presidency of Surendra Nath Banerjea, Mr. Montagu put his proposals on the parliamentary anvil.

<sup>1</sup> Now the President of the Indian Legislative Assembly.

In accordance with the wishes conveyed in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, two committees were appointed in 1918 to go into the question of the electorates for the different provincial and imperial legislatures, and of the division of the administrative portfolios of the Government into "reserved" and "transferred" departments. Lord Southborough came out from England to preside over the first Committee, and Mr. Feetham, with a great South African reputation, presided over the other. Among Indian members who served on Lord Southborough's Committee were Surendra Nath Banerjea and the Rt. Hon. Srinivasan Sastri, and those who served with Mr. Feetham were Dr. (now Sir) Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. (now Sir) Chimanlal Setalvad.

Before these Committees had begun their task, a general election took place in England, and Mr. Lloyd George's followers came out with a tremendous majority at the polls. In the new cabinet of Mr. Lloyd George, the late Edwin Samuel Montagu was again appointed Secretary of State for India and Sir Satyendra Prasanna Sinha his Under-secretary. This, of course, necessitated the raising of Sir S. P. Sinha to the British Peerage—a fact which, at the time being, created a great sensation all over India. For the first time in the history of India was an Indian raised to the British Peerage—and this against opposition from very high quarters—and given an office in the Government of the United Kingdom. The old angle of vision was fast being changed.

A few months after the Montagu-Chelmsford Report was published, the Government of India awoke to the revolutionary character of some of the proposals in that Report, and invited the opinion of all the provincial Governments upon these recommendations. In the course of a few months, when the provincial reports began to arrive in Simla, the Government of India, under very reactionary influences, had decided to go back upon the main recommendations of the Montford scheme, though Lord Chelmsford's Government still maintained allegiance to the principle of dyarchy, to which the Report had pinned its faith. In the meantime,

all the provincial Governments, excepting Bengal and Bihar and Orissa, had turned their back upon this principle, and wanted an advance of constitutional development on the old unitary structure of Government. The famous despatch of the Government of India of March 5th, 1919, contained the considered views of the central as well as the provincial Governments on the provisions of the proposed bill, together with many valuable notes from very many responsible officers of the State. The Reforms Committee of the India Council and the Secretary of State for India did not fall in with the principal changes suggested in this despatch, and went very much ahead of them.

At this time there was sitting in London a committee, under the presidency of Lord Crewe, previously Secretary of State for India, with Mr. Charles Roberts, and the late Sir George Brunyate and Bhupendra Nath Basu, as some of its members, for the reconstruction of the India Office. This committee, euphemistically described in official language as "Lord Crewe's Committee on the Home Administration of India Affairs", recommended some drastic changes in the character and constitution and the working of the India Office, and wanted all its expenditure to be placed under the British estimates in conformity with an old and insistent demand of the Indian National Congress, and with the usage of the Colonial Office.

Soon after Parliament had re-opened in 1919, Mr. Montagu introduced into the House of Commons his India Bill; and after Mr. Montagu's Bill had been read a second time in the House of Commons early in June, a select committee was appointed from both Houses of Parliament to examine its provisions and hear evidence. The Committee consisted of the following gentlemen: Lord Selborne (Chairman), the Duke of Northumberland, Lord Crewe, Viscount Midleton, Lord Sydenham, Lord Islington, Lord Sinha, Mr. Montagu, Sir John Rees, Mr. Ben Spoor, Mr. Acland, Mr. Ormsby-Gore, Sir Henry Craik, and Sir Thomas Bennett.

A large number of deputations went from India to

England for propagandist work in connection with Mr. Montagu's Government of India Bill. The Liberal Party was represented, by, among others, Surendra Nath Banerjea, Rt. Hon. Srinivasan Sastri, Messrs. C. Y. Chintamani, Ram Chandra Rao, N. M. Samarth, and the author of this book, all of whom appeared before the Joint Parliamentary Committee as witnesses on behalf of their party. The writer was the only witness who sounded a discordant note against the general chorus of approval of the new scheme of dyarchy. The Congress party was represented by Mr. V. J. Patel and Mr. Madhav Rao ; Mr. Tilak gave his evidence before the Committee on behalf of his own section of the Home Rule League ; while Mrs. Besant and Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer represented the other section of this League ; Messrs. Jinnah, Yakub Hossain, and the late Mr. Bhruguri gave their evidence on behalf of the Indian Moslem League, while Mr. A. J. Pugh and Sir John Hewett gave expression to Anglo-Indian opinion on the Bill. A large number of official members, including Lord Meston (then Sir James Meston), Sir Claude Hill, Sir Frank Sly, Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu and Sir Atul C. Chatterji were called upon to place their views before this Committee in camera. Among other gentlemen who appeared as witnesses before this Committee were Lord Southborough, Lord Carmichael, Sir Michael Sadler, Mr. Lionel Curtis, Sir Stanley Reed, and His Highness the Aga Khan. Opportunities were also provided for spokesmen of the depressed classes and the Indian Christian communities to acquaint the parliamentary committee with their views on the Indian Reforms. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the President of the Cawnpore session of the Indian National Congress (1925), also gave evidence before this Committee on the question of women's franchise. If there was any point on which the bulk of the witnesses appeared to agree in a more or less general way, it was in support of the Curtis brand of dyarchy, on which Mr. Montagu as Secretary of State for India had inflexibly set his heart.

After the recess, the committee met again in October, and their report was submitted to Parliament about the



middle of November. As soon as the Report of this committee was received by Parliament, the House of Commons read Mr. Montagu's bill for the third time, and it was rushed through the Lower House without much opposition. In the House of Lords, there was a slight difficulty in getting the bill through, though Lord Sinha, with the help of Lords Curzon and Selborne, piloted the Bill with great tact, ability and diligence. Some slight amendments were adopted in the Upper House, which Mr. Montagu had no hesitation in accepting in the Lower on behalf of the Government. The bill, however, got through the Houses of Parliament about the middle of December, and received royal assent on the 23rd of the same month. A Royal Proclamation<sup>1</sup> was issued along with His Majesty's assent, and paved the way for what then appeared to be to a smooth working of the transitional mechanism introduced by the Government of India Act of 1919.

"I rely on the leaders of the people, the Ministers of the future, to face responsibility and endure misrepresentation, to sacrifice much for the common interest of the State, remembering that true patriotism transcends party and communal boundaries; and, while retaining the confidence of the Legislatures, to co-operate with My Officers for the common good in sinking unessential differences and in maintaining the essential standards of a just and generous Government. Equally do I rely upon My Officers to respect their new colleagues and to work with them in harmony and kindness; to assist the people and their representatives in an orderly advance towards free institutions; and to find in these new tasks a fresh opportunity to fulfil as in the past their highest purpose of faithful service to My people."

The Government of India Act, like the Morley-Minto Reforms Act of 1909, was placed on the statute book as a mere skeleton outline of the principles on which the future Government of India and the Provincial Governments would be based, and left much of the details to be filled in

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix G.

by rules of devolution. Immediately after Mr. Montagu's Bill had been placed on the statute book, the Government of India was busy in framing rules in connection with this Act for examination by the Joint Select Committee and for acceptance by Parliament. This informal Advisory Committee discussed and settled the rules in the winter of 1920, at Simla and Delhi. At the same time Lord Meston was examining, as President of a Committee, the financial position of the various provinces and their relation with the Central Government. Lord Meston's Committee's awards, in the matter of financial adjustments, unfortunately did not give satisfaction in Bengal, Madras and Bombay, and the Rules framed by the Delhi Committee similarly fell short of the demands made by the non-Brahmins of Madras, the Sikhs of the Punjab, and the landlords of Bengal. The Sikhs and the Bengal Zemindars sent two deputations to England in 1920 to represent their grievances in the matter of electoral representations in the local and imperial legislature before Lord Selborne's Committee. Unfortunately for these two bodies, their deputations reached England two weeks too late, and already the Government of India were pressing the India Office to get the rules through Parliament, in order to enable them to arrange for the first general election in autumn. The Sikh claim for more adequate representation of their community, in the Councils was practically vetoed in a hurry, both by the India Office and by the Joint Select Committee, while the claims of the Bengal Zemindars were not so summarily dismissed.

The rules framed by the Government of India were ultimately passed by Parliament in July, 1920, at the instance, and with the recommendations of Lord Selborne's Committee. Only certain details regarding financial readjustments had not then reached the stage of finality.

One of the earliest steps taken towards the inauguration of the new scheme of reforms was the appointment in the Viceroy's Executive Councils of Mr. (now Sir) B. N. Sarma and Dr. (now Sir) Tej Bahadur Sapru, in succession to Sir Claude Hill and Sir George Lowndes—thus raising the number

of the Indian members of this Council from one to three<sup>1</sup>. The next most notable advance in this line was the appointment of Lord Sinha as Governor of Bihar and Orissa and the transfer of the cost of the India Office from the Indian Budget to the British estimates. As a sequel to the latter change, a High Commissioner was appointed for India, with headquarters at Grosvenor Gardens, to look after the purchase of stores for the Government of India, and the welfare of Indian students in England. Sir William Meyer, once the Finance Member of the Government of India, was the first occupant of this office, and since his death this post has been filled by two distinguished Indian Civilians—Mr. Bhore and Sir A. C. Chatterji, and by a non-official Indian, Sir D. Dalal.

The general elections under the new scheme were fixed for November and December, 1920, and a special session of the Congress held in Calcutta in September wanted the Extremist leader to boycott them in pursuance of a campaign of non-co-operation initiated and conducted by Mr. Gandhi. With this new movement the Khilafat Committee joined hands with vehemence. But so far as the first general election under the new Act was concerned, the efforts of non-co-operation failed to ensure their object, and all the seats in all the Councils were filled up. The new Councils in Madras, Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi were inaugurated by His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught in the months of January and February, 1921, and with their inauguration, the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme of Constitutional Reforms came fully into operation.

Before, however, the new Scheme of Reforms could be given a fair trial, India was overtaken by a new crisis and by a new movement, the history of which has to be recounted in order that we may appreciate the future development of Indian nationalism.

<sup>1</sup> The other Indian member at this time was Sir Sankaran Nair who resigned his seat in the Viceroy's Cabinet on account of his acute differences with his colleagues over the administration of martial law in the Punjab. Sir Sankaran Nair is now an elected non-official member of the Council of State.

## CHAPTER XII

### HISTORY OF THE GANDHI CULT

MUCH water had flowed down the Ganges between the inception of the Montagu Bill and the time when the Montford scheme of Reforms was put into operation. In 1919, 1920 and 1921, India was overtaken by a new wave of passion subsequently known as the non-co-operation movement.

India has been fortunately, and, in some matters, unfortunately, the country where, since the earliest dawn of history, there has been more speculation and experiment in metaphysics, theocracy, theology, sociology, theories of government, and domestic and state politics, than probably anywhere else in the world. From the highest concepts of the godhead and the most abstruse speculations of the Upanishads, and the Brahma Sutras, to the lowest and the most disgraceful details and rites of the Tantras and idol-worship on the one hand, and from the government by an intellectual aristocracy to village panchayets and tribal communism on the other, there has hardly been any theory, or practice of religion, or sociology, or government, which has not been tried in one stage or other of the country's history. India offers a more picturesque and complete museum of such experiments than perhaps all the other countries of the world put together.

In this chapter we shall deal with a problem which is almost unique in the story of our race. What is known to-day in India as "the non-co-operation movement" is an attempt to materialize in politics the immense potentialities of soul-force. The soul, as a dynamic force, is no new discovery in the history of Indian metaphysics, or in the spiritual practices of the Vedantist; and the realization of

its powers as a *summum bonum* has been one of the highest ideals of Indian mankind since the first Rika (the hymns) of the earliest Veda were composed and sung in the lonely valleys of the Aryavarta more than five thousand years ago.

Like all other peoples in the world, Indian mankind could not long forswear its material instincts and interests, as it grew in number and came to inhabit congested villages ; and with the passage of time the spirituality of life was shunted off to a side-track. We read in a passage in the Mahabharata that Duryadhana exhorted his kith and kin not to yield an inch of ground to anybody without a mortal combat. That shows how far the spirit of materialism had inoculated the body politic of ancient India long before the birth of Christ. In the course of the natural development of our material interests, a state of things soon followed which found expression in a life of inaction and apathy—earthly, as well as spiritual—very much helped by the conditions of a tropical climate. Whatever soul-force the Indian Aryan or the Brahmin may have developed in pre-historic days faded away as soon as India ceased to be a self-contained country, and came into contact with Persians and Greeks, Scythians, Pathans, Moguls, and other nomadic tribes of Central Asia. The soul, as a power to reckon with, was soon relegated to the background, and the hearth and the home, the womenfolk, the cattle and the harvests began to engage the principal attention of the Indian cultivator and the artisan. When the commerce of the world began to draw Asia and Europe together into a closer contact, India entered into a new phase of her life, and her spiritual interests survived only in traditions, and more often than not, in mere empty rituals.

After a hiatus of nearly fifty centuries, Mr. Gandhi has awakened us to the idea, once again, that man does not live by bread alone, and has, after all, such a thing as a soul, and that this soul holds in its ineluctable grip the fortune and destiny of Man.

With that idea, Mr. Gandhi had started a new campaign

in India in 1919, by which he was anxious to fight all the evils of our domestic and social life and the troubles and distempers of the body politic. It is curious that Count Tolstoy, who succeeded in inoculating Mr. Gandhi with the virus of the new spirit, had himself failed to propagate successfully the doctrine of "passive resistance" in his own country, or in any part of the western world.

Mr. Gandhi made his first experiment with this new idea in South Africa, where, for nearly ten years in the early part of this century, he had most willing materials to help him in its development and fruition. The Indian and Asiatic population in Natal and Transvaal, as soon as they were awakened to the position of their helplessness and isolation in a new country and a new clime, found in "passive resistance" a great weapon and a panacea. They soon gathered and rallied under the banner of Mr. Gandhi, then a young lawyer practising in Johannesburg, and began to defy anti-Asiatic legislations with such spirit of sacrifice that President Kruger and his lieutenants found the Indian problem perhaps the greatest of their difficulties. One of the reasons why England went to war with the Boers was openly declared by Joseph Chamberlain, then the Colonial Secretary in the Government of the United Kingdom, to be the Indian grievance against President Kruger—a grievance which had been brought to a head by Mr. Gandhi's "passive resistance" movement. After the Boer War was concluded and South Africa had been pacified and consolidated into a self-governing Dominion of the British Empire by the courageous statesmanship of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, many of the Indian grievances in the new Union were redressed, though not completely removed. A mission from India, with the late Gopal Krishna Gokhale as the principal negotiator, and Sir Benjamin Robertson, "on behalf of the Government of India", had been sent to the South African Union to see in what way the hard conditions of Indian life could be mitigated, and, in consequence of that mission, some further steps were taken by the Union Government and General Smuts to reconcile the Indians to their position in the new

scheme of things (the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement of 1914).<sup>1</sup> As soon as a satisfactory understanding of this question was arrived at, Mr. Gandhi transferred his activities from South Africa to India, and settled down in a colony, founded by himself at Sabarmati, in the neighbourhood of Ahmedabad in the Bombay Presidency, a part of India to which he belongs by birth.

After a period of schooling under the late Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and after taking some time to mature his plans, Mr. Gandhi emerged into Indian public life as a mighty champion of the down-trodden ryot. In 1916 and 1917 he interested himself in some agrarian trouble in the Kaira district, and came into the limelight in connection with a similar trouble in a Bihar district later on. It is amusing to recall the fact that Mr. Gandhi accepted membership and worked on a committee, appointed by the Government, with Sir Frank Sly, the late Governor of the Central Provinces, as its president, to enquire and report into the grievances of the Champaran peasantry. This was the beginning of a new awakening of the cultivating classes of India—a new consciousness of their rights and privileges as human beings. And this new spirit did not take long to percolate down to all the cultivating and industrial classes of India. To-day there is perhaps as great an industrial unrest and ferment in India as exists in any part of the Western world.

Since his return to India nearly sixteen years ago from his prolonged South African campaign, Mr. Gandhi had freely given expression to the idea that he did not find India—with

<sup>1</sup> When Mr. Gokhale visited South Africa in 1912, he made a preliminary settlement that if the Union Government did its utmost to remove the humiliation of the Indians in South Africa, Indian statesmen, on their part, would seek to relieve any panic in the minds of the South African people, lest Natal should be overwhelmed by Indian emigrants. Mr. Gandhi, then leader of the South African Indians, agreed to this, and he and General Smuts, the Union Premier, did their best to give effect to this understanding, which was known as the Gandhi-Smuts Settlement of 1914. It included a pledge that if any Indian settler wished to return to India, accepting the Union Government's bonus, he might do so on forfeiture of domicile. During the War, this agreement was faithfully kept by the Union Government, and no pressure was put upon the Indians to return. But after the War, there was a change in the situation, and ultimately came the Asiatic Bill applying pressure to Indians to leave the country.

her multitudinous population and with all the acute differences of speech, religion, habits and methods of life that obtain there—a suitable place for the practice of “passive resistance” or of civil disobedience as a remedy for any widespread popular grievance. But, in 1919, when the Rowlatt Bill<sup>1</sup> was being hustled through the Indian Legislative Council against the united opposition of all sections of the people in India, and was passed through it only to show how autocratic the Government was and how defiant it could be, Mr. Gandhi found the opportunity of his life.

Soon after this bill got through the Legislature and received viceregal assent, Mr. Gandhi entered an emphatic protest against the drastic provisions of the act and the manner of its passage through the Council. It was widely felt, not only by the Indian community, but by a very large section of liberal Englishmen, that the Rowlatt Act was a measure of great iniquity. In ordinary circumstances, under the peculiar conditions of Indian life, and under the inspiration of all our previous traditions, an agitation against such a colossal blunder would have driven sedition underground, and would probably have led thousands of impatient idealists in India to follow the methods of Irish Sinn Féin or the communism of the Third International at Moscow. But, for the first time in the history of India, the redress of Indian grievances was now sought not by methods of secret revolt or armed resistance, but by means of a quite different and novel weapon. Mr. Gandhi decided, and decided with extraordinary force and precision, that a weak, helpless, and disorganized people, like the Indian, had no other alternative left to it but to resist the strength of the Anglo-Indian Government with a stubborn moral force. To pit a moral or soul-force against physical strength—the organized strength of the Government established by law and maintained by a

<sup>1</sup> This is an Act which was passed in the old Indian Legislative Council, during the viceroyalty of Lord Chelmsford, in which the liberties of the people were placed in a certain measure at the mercy of the bureaucracy, the outstanding features being summary arrest and summary trial and hardly any appeals. The measure was placed in the Indian Statute Book for a temporary period of three years, and was never put into operation during its existence.



huge standing army—that was the procedure which Mr. Gandhi thought was the only way to meet the requirements of the Indian situation. This determination to measure the strength of two different forces was an extraordinary step, unprecedented not only in the annals of India, but in the whole history of the human race.

This was, then, the great illumination of the new Indian prophet, but Mr. Gandhi, for obvious reasons, did not, or could not, translate this new idea into practical politics all at once, or bring it into requisition in any practical shape for a long time. In the meantime he felt that something must be done, and, as a preparation for the campaign of “non-co-operation”, he began with an apparently simple programme of elementary discipline for the people of India.

With this end in view, he introduced the “Satyagraha” movement, as a disciplinary measure for the purpose of self-purification.<sup>1</sup> He started with the idea that serious evils had accumulated in Indian life as a result of our contact with Western civilization and materialism, and that we should try to purge these evils before we could forge forward towards self-realization and Swaraj.

Self-purification was, therefore, the first stage in Mr. Gandhi's programme, and a life of plain living and high thinking, of denial of pleasures and luxuries, of sacrifice of material interest, of an acceptance of truth (Satyagraha) at all costs, was enunciated as the basic principle of this new cult. Knowing the Indian people as he did, he insisted that at the background of all his teachings there should stand out in all our action and thought the great motive power of “ahimsa”—the absence of any spirit of hate and vindictiveness—a dogma which, under the inspiration of another great

<sup>1</sup> The Satyagraha pledge ran thus :—

‘Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bills are unjust, subversive of the principle of liberty and justice, and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals, on which the safety of the community as a whole and the state itself is based, we solemnly affirm that in the event of these Bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as may be thought fit and further affirm that in this struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person and property.’

Indian teacher had galvanized Indian mankind almost beyond recognition five centuries before Christ was born.

As the first demonstration of this new disciplinary propaganda, as well as a protest against the passage of the Rowlatt Act, Mr. Gandhi proclaimed April 6th, 1919, the second Sunday after the Rowlatt Act had received viceregal assent, as a day of general mourning and cessation of business. When April 6th came, it found India extraordinarily responsive and willing. All cities and towns and villages in India struck work on that day, and obeyed Mr. Gandhi in a manner which must have exceeded his wildest expectations; but unfortunately there was one drawback. Mr. Gandhi's wishes were carried out everywhere, but, in some places, in a spirit quite in conflict with the great doctrine of "ahimsa", or non-violence.

Law and order were defied at Delhi, and the police and the people came into sharp conflicts in many other places. What with agrarian troubles, scarcity, forcible recruitment of soldiers to supply man power to the Allies and Mr. Gandhi's externment<sup>1</sup>, the Punjab was in a ferment and seething with discontent. Above all the story of the Rowlatt Act had been exaggerated by wicked wire-pullers and mischievous agitators. It was believed in some quarters that attempts were even made to tamper with the loyalty of the Indian Army. The emissaries of the Third International at Moscow and the agents of the Court of Kabul, with the red Bolshevik Programme in their pockets, were rushing about in all parts of these provinces to create trouble and discontent against British rule. The powder being dry, the exaggerated reports of the provisions of the Rowlatt Act acted as a lighted torch. Then occurred the atrocities of Amritsar and Jallianwallabagh, and the proclamation of martial law in Amritsar, Lahore, Gujranwalla and other places under the orders of Sir Michael O'Dwyer. Martial law has been described by an English political philosopher of considerable repute as only "a fine name for the negation of all law", and, under this cover, a

<sup>1</sup> Under orders of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the then ruler of the Punjab, Mr. Gandhi was prohibited from entering that province.

real reign of terror was established in Amritsar and in Lahore by the late General Dyer and Lt.-Col. Frank Johnson respectively. Curfew orders were promulgated, flogging was administered, students were expelled from schools and colleges, and the famous crawling order was promulgated.

Chitta Ranjan Das at this stage threw himself into the eddying currents of Indian politics as one of the members of a non-official Committee appointed by the Congress to enquire into, and report on, the atrocities committed at these places, and on the administration of martial law which followed them. On this Committee, Chitta Ranjan and Mr. Gandhi came into personal contact for the first time, and established that intimate relation which remained the most outstanding alliance in contemporary Indian public life.

A few months after the massacre of Jallianwallabagh came the Treaty of Sèvres which infuriated Indian Mussalmans to white heat. Shortly afterwards, the leaders of the Khilafat movement, which aimed at seeing the temporal and spiritual powers of the "Caliph" (the Sultan of Turkey) restored to their pristine glory, joined hands with Mr. Gandhi, and truce was made between the two warring communities of India, the Hindus and the Moslems. This came as a great surprise to the Indian political and social world.

At this stage, Mr. Gandhi's movement began to languish as a "Satyagraha", or a mere psychic, propaganda, and took the shape of an intensive political agitation.

The publication of the Congress Sub-Committee's Report on the Punjab Tragedy (of 1919), the minority Report of Lord Hunter's Committee of Enquiry, signed by Sir Chimanlal Setalval of Bombay and Mr. Jagat Naryan of Lucknow, began to show the weaknesses and defects of British administration in India, and the extraordinary sympathy shown to Sir Michael O'Dwyer, and the purse of three lakhs of rupees presented to the late General Dyer by his friends and admirers as a reward for the massacre of Jallianwallah Bagh, exasperated Indian opinion beyond description. About the beginning of the year 1920, Mr. Gandhi began to

characterize the Government of India as "satanic", and wanted all people to keep their "hands off" such a Government. This was the beginning of the great agitation which is now generally known as the "non-co-operation" movement.

In September, 1920, a special session of the Indian National Congress met in Calcutta under the presidency of Lala Lajpat Rai, and gave its seal and sanction to Mr. Gandhi's new movement. Chitta Ranjan opposed the resolution, from the start, with a vehemence all his own. It is believed that on the acceptance of the non-co-operation resolution by the Congress, Chitta Ranjan and some of his Bengali friends were thinking of seceding from that body. But the wise and patriotic intervention of Aswini Kumar Dutt prevented them from committing this political *hari kari*. Students were advised by the Congress to withdraw from government aided schools and colleges, lawyers to abandon practice in the British courts, title-holders to give up their honours received from the Government, and intending candidates for the new elections for the reconstituted Councils to withdraw from the contest. In pursuance of this resolution of the Congress, the classrooms in most of the schools and colleges were emptied, and several lawyers in different provinces suspended their practice.

The rest of the story of the non-co-operation movement may be briefly summarized. While, in the Congress in Calcutta in September, 1920, Chitta Ranjan Das opposed Mr. Gandhi's idea of the initiation of the non-co-operation movement, three months after, at Nagpur, he entered into a secret pact with Mr. Gandhi (known as the Das-Gandhi pact) by which each promised the other freedom of propaganda in his own sphere, for the future. As soon as this pact was entered into, Chitta Ranjan became a complete convert to the non-co-operation idea, and came forward to move the resolution on the subject with great force and fervour, the entire Congress noticing this change as a great personal triumph of Mr. Gandhi. From this day forward Chitta Ranjan became one of the stoutest supporters of the new movement, and on his return to Calcutta from Nagpur, he

suspended his practice and renounced the habits of smoking and drinking, and free indulgence in modern luxuries and creature comforts to which unfortunately he had fallen a hopeless victim, and began to live the life of a political and spiritual ascetic.

In April, 1921, Lord Chelmsford retired from the viceroyalty and Lord Reading succeeded him. Mr. Gandhi did not proclaim any "hartal" or "strike" on the arrival of Lord Reading in India; on the contrary he treated him with some consideration and ceremony, as he had done, three months before, the Duke of Connaught, when he came out to inaugurate the reconstituted Councils of the Empire. His conduct in this matter was guided by the idea that it was his duty to make war against the system of government that obtains in this country, and not to attack or offer any insult to any person in particular. In the beginning of the month of May, Mr. Gandhi himself went to Simla and had several interviews with the new Viceroy, thus co-operating, for once, with the head of a Government which he had himself described a few months ago as "satanic", and from whose upas shadow he had advised all his countrymen to keep away.

In the meantime the All-India Congress Committee had met at Bezwada (in the Andhra country of the Madras Presidency) and drafted a new programme to accelerate the "non-co-operation" movement. This programme was a cry for "men, money, and munitions", by which Mr. Gandhi and his friends meant the enlistment of ten million of members in the various Congress Committees in the country, the raising of the same number of rupees for the "Tilak Swarajya Fund"—started in memory of the late Bal Gangadhar Tilak for the establishment of Swaraj in India—and the introduction of twenty lakhs of spinning-wheels into the various homesteads of India. This new programme was drafted with a view to make India independent of British rule, British trade and commerce, and of British schemes of law and order. At the end of July, 1921, there was held another meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay, in which the boycott of foreign clothes was included as an additional and



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prominent item in the new movement, the idea being that India could be made independent of British goods and trade connection.

Following the resolutions of the Bezwada and Bombay meetings, an attempt was made by Chitta Ranjan Das to raise a large number of national volunteers in Bengal with the primary object of boycotting and replacing the sale of Manchester piece goods by Indian hand-woven *khaddar*. The activities of these young volunteers soon became a grave cause of anxiety to Clive Street, and the Government of Bengal took unusual measures to watch and check this new propaganda. Soon after this volunteering activity was attacked by an official notification that it was an illegal movement. In the autumn of 1921, several thousands of young men were clapped into prison all over Bengal for defying this order, and, early in December, Chitta Ranjan Das' wife and sister were arrested in a public street in Calcutta for hawking *khaddar*. Srimati Basanti Devi and her sister-in-law were, however, released as soon as they were arrested, but the fact that the government had not hesitated to touch such respectable ladies for such a paltry offence left the public mind boiling with indignation.

When the volunteering activity in Bengal reached its high water mark, and thousands of young men had courted the hospitality of His Majesty's prisons, Mr. Gandhi and Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya entered into pourparlers with the new Viceroy for widening the basis of the Montagu constitution. The conversations proved sterile, and Congress work and propaganda in the country were again pushed actively.

But before the Bombay or the Bezwada programme could be put through on an efficient basis, the activity of the Congress was paralysed by a series of unfortunate and unforeseen riots at Chauri Chaura, Gorakhpur, Madras and Bombay. The working committee of the Congress met in a panic at a place called Bardoli, under the presidency of Mr. Gandhi, and adopted the following resolutions, pulling up Congress work throughout the country.



(1) The Working Committee deplors the inhuman conduct of the mob at Chauri Chaura, in having brutally murdered constables and wantonly burned the police thana, and tenders its sympathy to the families of the bereaved.

(2) In view of nature's repeated warnings, every time mass civil disobedience has been imminent, some popular violent outburst has taken place, indicating that the atmosphere in the country is not non-violent enough for mass civil disobedience, the latest instance being the tragic and terrible events at Chauri Chaura, near Gorakhpur, the Working Committee of the Congress resolves that mass civil disobedience contemplated at Bardoli and elsewhere be suspended and instructs the local Congress Committee forthwith to advise the cultivators to pay the land revenue and other taxes due to the Government and whose payment might have been suspended in anticipation of mass civil disobedience and instructs them to suspend every other preparatory activity of an offensive nature.

(3) The suspension of mass civil disobedience shall be continued till the atmosphere is so non-violent as to ensure non-repetition of popular atrocities such as at Gorakhpur, or hooliganism such as at Bombay and Madras respectively on the 17th November, 1921, and 13th January, 1922.

(4) In order to promote a peaceful atmosphere, the Working Committee advise till further instructions, all Congress organizations to stop activities specially designed to court arrest and imprisonment, save normal Congress activities including voluntary hartals wherever an absolutely peaceful atmosphere can be assured, and for that end all picketing shall be stopped, save for the bona fide and peaceful purpose of warning the visitors to liquor shops against the evils of drinking. Such picketing to be controlled by persons of known good character and specially selected by the Congress Committee concerned.

(5) The Working Committee advises, till further instructions, the stoppage of all volunteer processions and public meetings merely for the purpose of defiance of the notifications regarding such meetings. This, however, shall not interfere

with the private meetings of the Congress and other committees or public meetings which are required for the conduct of the normal activities of the Congress.

(6) Complaints having been brought to the notice of the Working Committee that ryots are not paying rents to the zemindars, the Working Committee advises Congress workers and organizations to inform the ryots that such withholding of rent is contrary to the resolutions of the Congress and that it is injurious to the best interests of the country.

(7) The Working Committee assures the zemindars that the Congress movement is in no way intended to attack their legal rights, and even that where the ryots have grievances the Committee desire that redress should be sought by mutual consultations and by the usual recourse to arbitrations.

(8) Complaints having been brought to the notice of the Working Committee that in the formation of volunteer corps great laxity prevails in the selection and that insistence is not laid on the full use of handspun and hand-woven *khaddar*, and on the full observance by Hindus of the rule as to the removal of untouchability, nor is care being taken to ascertain that the candidates believe fully in the observance of non-violence in intent, word and deed, in the terms of the Congress resolution, the Working Committee calls upon all Congress organizations to revise their lists and remove from them the names of all such volunteers as do not strictly conform to the requirements of the pledge.

(9) The Working Committee is of opinion that unless Congressmen carry out to the full the Congress constitution and the resolutions from time to time issued by the Working Committee, it is not possible to achieve its objects expeditiously or at all.

(10) Whereas the Gorakhpur tragedy is a powerful proof of the fact that the mass mind has not yet fully realized the necessity of non-violence as an integral, active, and chief part of mass civil disobedience, and whereas the reported indiscriminate acceptance of persons as volunteers in contravention of the Congress instructions betrays want of appreciation of a vital part of Satyagraha, and whereas in the

opinion of the Working Committee the delay in the attainment of the national aim is solely due to the weak and incomplete execution in practice of the constitution of the Congress, and with a view to perfecting the internal organization, the Working Committee advise all Congress organizations to be engaged in the following activities :

(1) To enlist at least one crore of members of the Congress. Note : (1) Since peace (non-violence and legitimacy), and truth are the essence of the Congress creed, no person should be enlisted who does not believe in non-violence, and truth as indispensable for the attainment of Swaraj. The creed of the Congress must therefore be carefully explained to each person who is appealed to to join the Congress. Note : (2) the workers should note that no one who does not pay the annual subscription can be regarded as a qualified Congress man. All the old members are therefore to be advised to register their names.

(2) To popularize the spinning wheel and organize the manufacture of handspun and hand-woven *khaddar*. Note : (1) To this end all workers and office-bearers should be dressed in *khaddar*, and it is recommended that with a view to encourage others they should themselves learn hand-spinning.

(3) To organize national schools. Note : No picketing of Government schools should be resorted to ; but reliance should be placed upon the superiority of national schools in all vital matters to command attendance.

\* (4) To organize the depressed classes for a better life, to improve their social, mental and moral condition, to induce them to send their children to national schools, and to provide for them the ordinary facilities which other citizens enjoy. Note : whilst, therefore, where the prejudice against the untouchables is still strong in places, separate schools and separate wells must be maintained out of Congress funds, every effort

should be made to draw such children to national schools and to persuade the people to allow the untouchables to use the common wells.

(5) To organize the temperance campaign against the people addicted to the drink habit by house to house visits, and to rely more upon appeal to the drinker in his home than upon picketing.

(6) To organize village and town "panchayats" for the private settlement of all disputes, reliance being placed solely upon the force of public opinion and the truthfulness of "panchayat" decisions to ensure obedience to them. Note: In order to avoid even the appearance of coercion, no social boycott should be resorted to against those who will not obey the "panchayats' " decisions.

(7) In order to promote and emphasize unity among all classes and races and mutual good-will, the establishment of which is the aim of the movement of non-co-operation, to organize a social service department that will render help to all irrespective of differences of caste, creed, or nationality in times of illness or accident. Note: A non-co-operator whilst firmly adhering to his creed will deem it a privilege to render personal service in case of illness or accident to every person whether English or Indian.

(8) To continue the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund and to call upon every Congressman or Congress sympathiser to pay at least one hundredth part of his annual income for the year 1921. Every province to send every month 25 per cent of its income from the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund to the All-India Congress Committee.

Soon after the above resolution was passed at Bardoli, Mr. Gandhi and his lieutenants found the entire non-co-operation movement tottering on its last legs. Mr. Gandhi clearly saw the mischief that the Bardoli resolution

was causing throughout Congress circles all over the country, and a very large and important part of it was recanted at a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held in Delhi a few weeks later. When Mr. Gandhi assented to the virtual scrapping of the Bardoli resolution, it was feared in some quarters that the limit of official tolerance of a seditious propaganda had been reached, and he was put under arrest in March, 1922, on a charge of sedition. A few days later, he himself pleaded guilty to the charge, and was sentenced to six years' simple imprisonment.

With the incarceration of Mr. Gandhi early in 1922, the non-co-operation movement practically collapsed in all branches. We have noticed the failure of the boycott of the schools and the courts immediately after he was put into prison, and during the last few months of his prison life at Poona a section of his followers, under the leadership of Chitta Ranjan Das, had gone back upon his idea of the boycott of the Councils and had invaded the new provincial and the central Legislatures in large numbers in the general election of 1923.

When Mr. Gandhi retired to Juhu on medical advice for the restoration of his health after his operation and release, he found that the helm of the Congress craft was no longer in his hands and that a new steersman had taken his place. In 1924, Mr. Gandhi entered into a pact with Chitta Ranjan Das in Calcutta, surrendering his political conscience to the great Bengali leader. Next year, after Chitta Ranjan's death, he surrendered to the All-India Congress Committee his favourite yarn franchise (*khaddar* subscription) for members of the Congress, and after the Cawnpore Congress was over in the last week of the year (1925), he finally announced his decision to withdraw from politics altogether for one year.

In the above pages, we have just given a running account of the inception of, and the principal events in, the non-co-operation movement in India, and we shall now discuss some of the outstanding features and implications of the movement. When "Satyagraha" was started as a purificatory movement, it made little appeal to the Indian

people, but when " ahimsa " ceased to operate as its dominant feature, it at once captured the popular imagination and soon developed into a mass movement. The Punjab tragedies of 1919 furnished the necessary fuel for this fierce racial fire. Later on, the humiliation imposed on Turkey by the Allied Powers over the Treaty of Sèvres was made the occasion by Indian Mussalmans of a bitter crusade against England for her part in the Treaty. A movement that evidently could not thrive and flourish on " ahimsa " began to spread like a prairie fire as soon as it took the form of an intensive political propaganda, and reached a climax when the Prince of Wales arrived in India in November, 1921.

The above points to two morals: one is that no mass movement is possible, which is not based on the elemental passions of mankind. And the second is, that of love and hate, hate is certainly the stronger and the dominant passion in the human heart.

Though Mr. Gandhi's movement has failed to provide for the reconstruction of Indian life, it would be inaccurate to describe it as wholly sterile, or as mere froth and bubble upon waters lashed to fury by a political storm. Politically, it has given a great stimulus to national renaissance, having for the first time brought together the classes and the masses, the Hindus and Mussalmans, into one line of common political thought. That must be considered an outstanding gain, so long as man regards nationalism and patriotism as a great point in social progress. As an anti-British movement, it has achieved much greater success than even its wildest advocates had ever expected. It succeeded in bringing British authority into contempt for a time, and in temporarily damaging British prestige and dignity, from the capital of the Empire to the tiniest villages in the remote interior.

Let us take the Gandhi programme item by item, and see how far each item has succeeded in realizing Mr. Gandhi's dreams. The Hindu-Mahomedan alliance was the boldest experiment in the Gandhi campaign—bold in its idealism and bold in its conception—but it was evidently a scheme which counted results before they were apparent. Since the dawn

of history, nothing has caused greater strife and discord between man and man than religion, or, in the more expressive language of Thomas Carlyle, "religiosity". Nothing has been a more fruitful source of bloodshed and carnage in the history of this world than the efforts and anxiety of the human soul to seek salvation and immortality in some particular way and through some particular rituals. Nothing has retarded the progress of the human race so effectively and so successfully as the evolution, or the fanaticism, of "faith". The struggles between Heathenism and Christianity in early Rome, the feuds between Buddhism and Hinduism in India about the sixth and seventh century A.D., and the wars of the Crusades at a later date—which brought Europe and the Near East into a welter of international carnage—are the most outstanding illustrations of our point. The fact is that nothing stirs the human passions so violently as one's own "faith", which always fights shy of "reason". In an atmosphere where the reign of reason has not been established "faith" will always mean blind prejudice and remain the source or the fountain spring of action and interaction of exclusive dogmas.

In European countries, where the reign of reason has supplanted the reign of faith, society is no longer disturbed by religious differences. Yet, in Europe, the difference between Roman Catholicism and the Greek Church, and between Protestantism and the creed of the Vatican, is still potent to stir now and again the worst human passions. In Western Europe, the Emerald Isle still remains a sad example of what havoc religious differences may yet create in our day. Turning to the East and to our own country we find that, in spite of many synthetic factors—such as common laws, common administration and a general community of interest—it has been found impossible to weld the different peoples of India into a homogeneous nationality. In 1919, Mr. Gandhi, like the great Akbar, took upon himself the task of materializing the dream of a common federation of man in this land, "to hush for ever the menacing poison of intolerant priests, those cobras ever setting up their hoods". At one

time, it looked as if Mr. Gandhi was within an ace of success in establishing his social millennium, and like Akbar's dream he would be able

“Stone by stone to raise a sacred fane,  
A temple, neither Pagod, Mosque nor Church,  
But loftier, simpler, always open door'd  
To every breath from heaven.”

But this dream remains as unrealized to-day as ever, few people having come to worship at this new tabernacle. Hindus might join hands with Moslems to find a big stick to beat the English with, and sink, for the time being, the differences of their ideals and temperament, but the fact has been conveniently forgotten by large classes of our people that politics cannot permanently cover such fundamental differences.

If large numbers of Roman Catholics and Protestants of different nationalities are living side by side in harmony in the United States, in Canada and in Switzerland, they have only succeeded in doing so by rounding off their religious prejudices and developing a common secular culture. In India, a common culture is unthinkable with nearly ninety per cent of the population steeped in absolute ignorance, divided by more than a hundred different languages and a thousand castes and all drawing their intellectual nourishment from intolerant dogmas preached by fanatical pundits and mad mullahs. The Moplah, the Bhagalpore, and the Chauri Chaura riots of 1921, and later the Multan and Amritsar riots, together with the acute differences that have recently arisen between the Hindus and the Mahomedans over the “Suddhi” and the Sangathan movements<sup>1</sup> in the United Provinces and the Punjab and the bitterness and feuds generated between them over the question of Hindu processional music before mosques in Calcutta and other

<sup>1</sup> These are organizations started by Swami Shraddhananda (Lala Munshi Ram) to bring back into the fold of Hinduism certain classes of converts to Islam who were originally Hindus, and to consolidate the ties and bonds of Hindus all over the country. This great Hindu social reformer was assassinated in his home at Delhi by a Mahomedan by the name of Abdul Rashid in December, 1926.



parts of Bengal have revealed the fact that our differences are too deep to be easily overcome.

When all the various aspects of this complicated national question is considered, one is bound to admit that neither the processional music of the Hindu nor the political ambition of the Mahomedans is the real or the root cause of the rupture of the Hindu-Mahomedan understanding. These have only been used as covers or pretexts, while the principal causes of antagonism between them lie deep down in the blood of each of these warring communities. Three years ago, the abduction of Hindu women by fanatical Mahomedans became so prevalent in rural Bengal that the Hindus found it necessary to organize a Women's Protection League to prevent crimes of this nature in remote districts of the province.

Only on the basis of a common secular culture can a nationality be built up in these days—either in the East or in the West. This development must be real, genuine, and sincere, and no camouflage or bluff can be expected to solve such an outstanding national issue. Chitta Ranjan devoted the greater part of his later life to the formation of a Hindu-Moslem alliance based on practical politics rather than on the idealism of Mr. Gandhi.

As in the case of the Hindu-Mahomedan problem, so also in the case of the solution of the educational problem of India, Mr. Gandhi miscalculated the signs of the times and built his hopes on very slender materials. In his enthusiasm for his new-fangled scheme of national education, he completely overlooked the conditions of present-day Indian life and the requirements of the Indian people. In his campaign on behalf of "national education", he had secured the unstinted and loyal co-operation of Chitta Ranjan, and, between them they not only succeeded in raising a large sum of money, but also in establishing hundreds of these schools throughout the province. These schools got into fashion with the people for a few months, and at one time Ashutosh Mookerjee, the then Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, became extremely nervous over the future of the great educational institution at College Square. The University

classes and most of the schools and colleges in Calcutta and outside were being deserted, even scholarship holders abandoning their stipends. A large number of brilliant students who had joined the University affiliated schools and colleges as teachers and professors would have nothing more to do with them, and got themselves attached to the staff of the new national schools without any consideration or payment. Hardly a year had gone round when the people awakened to their mistake and the national schools were deserted as hastily as they had been established twelve months before. The point is, that the older schools and colleges catered for the profession and the material occupations of Indian life, while the national schools held out no prospects before their Indian students. As soon as the people awoke to this situation, the spirit of idealism had to yield to the exigencies of practical politics, and the propaganda of national education vanished into thin air.

One of the most noticeable features of Bengali life during the non-co-operation agitation was the failure, unlike the other great movements of the world, of the Gandhi cult to make any impression on Bengali arts, science, music and letters. While the Partition days fostered renaissance in arts and letters, the spirit of the non-co-operation times failed to give to any Bengali any new thoughts, ideals or inspiration. Excepting Rabindra Nath Tagore and Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, who had already come to occupy very distinguished places in the world of letters before the Gandhi cult came into vogue, no writer came into prominence in the period under review. During this time, however, a large number of books were published by ex-members of revolutionary societies, recanting their old pet theories of a short cut to Swaraj. Upendra Nath Bandopadhyaya's *Story of an Exile*, Barindra Kumar Ghose and Ullasker Dutt's reminiscences and impressions of prison life, Bhupendra Nath Dutt's *Unpublished Political History of India*, Nalim Kishore Guha's *Story of the Revolutionary Movement in Bengal*, and Sachindra Nath Sanyal's *My Prison Life*, are some of the most interesting literary products of the period. In this

connection may be mentioned Sarat Chandra Chatterjee's *Pather Dabi*, the *Right of Way*, a book which describes the revolutionary mind of Bengal in a wonderfully faithful manner. This is the only book in Bengali of which the first edition of three thousand copies was sold before it could reach the booksellers' hands, and, within a month of its publication, was being sold in the market at double its original price. It may be noted here that the theme of Sarat Chandra's book is the very antithesis of the Gandhi spirit, and in consequence it was proscribed a few months later by the local government.

In consequence of the high hopes built by the people on Mr. Gandhi's propaganda for the attainment of Swaraj, commerce, trade and industries were also equally neglected in Bengal. In this respect there was a striking contrast with the years of the Partition Agitation (the first Boycott Agitation in Bengal) from 1906 to 1910. In those days two jute mills, a few cotton mills, a tobacco factory and hundreds of small factories were established by Indian enterprise and capital. The local credit societies all received a great stimulus, and in many districts they were reorganized and reinforced with new men and money. The Bengal National Bank, which had to be closed only a few months ago,<sup>1</sup> was established in 1907 and came to the rescue of many struggling infant industries. The Hindusthan Insurance Society and a National Insurance Company took away from the European firms at that time a large amount of insurance business, and the cry everywhere was for more investment in Indian industries and more patronage to indigenous production. During the non-co-operation agitation, all the material forces of a modern civilization were practically forgotten and neglected till a period of great industrial boom (1919-1921) was succeeded by a period of ever increasing economic depression. During this period the only industry that the people took very kindly to, and were insistently urged by leader after leader to follow, through good report and evil, was the pursuit of the *charka* (the spinning wheel). At one time the

<sup>1</sup> Compulsorily liquidated by order of the High Court at Calcutta in August, 1927.

hope was largely entertained that the pursuit of the *charka* would automatically usher in a period of Swaraj in this country. With the incarceration of Mr. Gandhi, in March, 1922, the *charka* movement received a great set-back and these whilom symbols of Indian independence and prosperity were relegated to the scrap-heap.

Chitta Ranjan had never pinned his faith to the cult of the *charka*, and this led to the formation of the Swarajya Party in 1922, to carry on the non-co-operation campaign more effectively from within the Councils.

Socially, the most important item in the Gandhi cult is the elevation of the position of Indian women. As a principle of social and domestic conduct, orthodox and conservative families—which constitute over seventy-five per cent of the Indian population—have generally accepted this principle of life. Many respectable Indian ladies are coming out of the purdah and are anxious to take a hand in the public movements of their country. Even the love for jewellery and for fine clothes has given way in most Bengali homes to a life of plain living and public service. Not only are women presiding over provincial conferences, heading political processions, and addressing vast audiences from the rostrum of the Indian National Congress, but some of them have been admitted into the municipal corporations of many cities and are sharing responsibility for their civic administration. Recently, in Bengal, Madras, the Punjab and in Bombay, and in the Indian States of Travancore, Cochin and Jhalawar, they have been conceded the franchise for the Council elections. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the most gifted daughter of Bengal, presided over the session of the Indian National Congress held in Cawnpore (December, 1925) and a woman occupies the position of the Deputy President of the Legislative Council of Madras to-day.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yet in spite of the stimulus given by the Gandhi movement to the cause of women's education and emancipation no woman of Bengal has to-day a place in the local Legislative Council, in the University of Dacca, in the Corporation of Calcutta and in the municipal and district Boards anywhere in the province. At the last election of councillors for the Calcutta Corporation held in March, 1927, ladies contested two seats but unfortunately both were defeated.

As for removing the stigma of untouchability from the "panchama" and the depressed classes, Mr. Gandhi's campaign cannot be considered very successful, and nowhere does the condition of these submerged classes appear to have been appreciably alleviated. Though Mr. Gandhi never lacked courage to wound communal susceptibilities, he has been wise enough not to attack the citadels of the Indian caste-system or the debasing influences of idolatry, or the system of early marriages, or enforced widowhood—customs which have atrophied and paralysed the life of the nation for centuries. The majority of Indian mankind still refuse to make any considerable advance in social ideas and conventions, though progress along these lines cannot be said to have been quite negligible.

Caste and idolatry Mr. Gandhi has certainly abstained from attacking in an open fight, but no student of contemporary social economy can deny that he has considerably undermined their influence by elevating the condition of the depressed classes—and by removing their untouchability, by the greater currency of inter-caste dining, by lifting the purdah to a very large extent, by trying to bring Hindus and Moslems together on one platform of common understanding, by urging on the necessity and wisdom of manual labour for all classes of people, and by putting his foot down on the slaughter of animals before Hindu gods. .

And there are one or two matters, at any rate, in which Mr. Gandhi seems to have attained remarkable and unique success. Long before the arrival of Mr. "Pussyfoot" Johnson in India, Mr. Gandhi had practically succeeded in making large portions of India "dry". Excepting among Indians returned from England and other foreign countries and wage-earning factory operatives and certain classes of hill-men, drinking spirituous liquors is considered now almost as a crime against morality and social purity.

The ideal of plain living appeals to Indian mankind more probably than any other nation in the world; yet the Indian masses refuse to be moved by Mahatma Gandhi's earnest

appeals to their sentiments to give up foreign articles in their possession, to abandon the luxuries they can afford to pay for, and to direct all their time and attention to the realization of their spiritual and political ideals by the intensive cultivation of the *charka* and soul-force. It is true that the masses are elevated to a higher plane of life, not by the slow process of individual development and culture, but only when their imaginations are caught at a psychological moment. In spite of all this, there can be no doubt of the fact that Mahatma Gandhi has lighted for our people the beacon-fire on the mountain-top which will lead us onward, stage by stage, to the Promised Land.

When all has been said, one is bound to acknowledge the fact that Mahatma Gandhi has restored to India her lost "soul", and that he has set her face towards the light. It is not in quest of material happiness or in the achievements of applied science that India must find her destiny. It is in the assertion of the superiority of the spirit over the flesh, of the mind over matter, that she must find her ultimate salvation. If India to-day has not risen to the height of Mahatma Gandhi's demands, she has, at any rate, awakened to their wisdom and necessity. The vision of the dream has now obsessed India, and it is only a question of time for her to realize it.

The aim of Mahatma Gandhi is good, and the presentation of his idea of soul-force to a war-distracted and capitalistic society is his greatest service to the modern world. But to reach his objective other means will have to be found than those that he has laid down for his people. The discovery of a new way to his goal will be the task before the new world for many a century to come, and, when it is discovered, human society will achieve its millenium.

## CHAPTER XIII

### REFORMS AND AFTER

It is now a little over six years since the Montford Reform Scheme was brought into full operation, and the Provincial and Imperial Councils were reconstituted on the basis of the Government of India Act of 1919. In ordinary circumstances this period would not allow full scope for the realization of the objects which this Act had in view. But India has been galvanized with new ideas and has covered the track of centuries in these few years in such a way that the Reforms have already been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

With the outbreak of the European War, India entered on a new phase of political aspiration. She now modified in a very large measure her older demands for Swaraj, and like most other countries in the world, threw her older ideals into the melting pot. The ungrudging contribution in men and money to the last War by certain classes of people, naturally led many to expect not only the complete fulfilment of the policy laid down in Queen Victoria's Proclamation, but also a great advance in the attainment of political individuality. The enunciation by President Wilson of the principle of "self-determination" in the government of nations and countries had also added a new zest and kindled in New India an ambition for a complete scheme of self-government. In the circumstances, the Montagu Act fell flat and was looked upon more as a halting measure of reform than as a real and substantial measure of responsible self-government.

About ten years ago, bitterness against England had reached such a pitch that all British and Allied repulses on the various fronts of the War were made the occasion for great rejoicing, among certain classes of people. With the defeat of Germany, Austria, and Turkey in 1918, came a great disillusionment to the people of India, who were not

awakened to the fact that England still remained the greatest power on earth, and that it would not be possible to bring the British Government in India to its knees as easily as had been expected, and, in some quarters, hoped for.

But before the people of India could readjust relations with their British rulers, and modify their demands for a full-blooded responsible government, Mr. Gandhi interposed with a new programme and a new scheme to carry his people to their ultimate destiny. While some of the extreme Nationalist leaders of nearly twenty years ago would have rejoiced to find sedition working underground, Mr. Gandhi now gave political thought a new direction, and opened a new campaign of opposition. Instead of physical force or any other known means of popular resistance, he depended on the moral resources of the nation for a straight and open fight against the Government imposed upon us by British diplomacy and feat of arms. Material and vested interests and the traditions and habits of generations were, however, so deeply rooted that no amount of ethical teaching or fervid eloquence could tear the people away from them. While one section of the people developed a revolutionary mentality, another section was caught by the lure of the Gandhi movement. One result of this changed outlook was the emergence of a class of public men and thinkers who perforce reconciled themselves to working the Montford Reforms for whatever they were worth.

The boycott of the Councils in the first general election of 1920 therefore proved neither effective nor sterile. Many courageous and independent men seeking election at once withdrew their candidature at the desire of Mr. Gandhi, and left the field open to a small minority of placemen, title-hunters, and aspirants to office in the new order of things. With this group weak-kneed landlords, indifferent lawyers and taluqdars, mealy-mouthed bankers and merchants threw in their lot, with a handful of Liberals of the old school who still clung to and pinned their faith on *ap-ki-wasti* principles of self-aggrandisement. The result was that an extraordinary medley of people was returned to all the Councils of the



Indian Empire, including those at Delhi and Simla, with a view to giving the new reforms a trial.

The Central Legislature, as we have already noticed was not much altered by the Montagu Act, excepting that it was divided into two Houses and the strength and powers of the bi-cameral legislature at Delhi and Simla came to be widened by some of its provisions and a large number of items in the Imperial budget were placed under its control. In Delhi and Simla the non-official majority in the Assembly came to possess a large share of control over bills, resolutions, and the Budget. But beyond that the Legislature had no power or responsibility, as the Central Government lay beyond the scope of the Montford Reforms.

Though the Indian Legislative Assembly was like the provincial Councils constituted in a very unsatisfactory manner, and lacked the presence of the advanced Nationalists, it must be said to its credit that it made a great effort, and succeeded in a very large measure, in giving effect to some of the principal aspirations of the people. The Press Acts of 1908 and 1910, which had been a sword of Damocles to the newspapers of India, were both repealed by the Central Legislature in 1922, and some of the repressive laws, piled on the Statute Book from 1905 to 1920, were taken out of it the following year, on the recommendations of a strong Committee over which Dr. (now Sir) Tej Bahadur Sapru presided as the Law Member.

Among other notable achievements of the newly constituted Assembly was the adoption of a policy of discriminating protection for nascent and struggling Indian industries, as recommended by the Fiscal Commission, and of the nationalization, or what is known as the State management, of the principal railways of the country, even against the recommendation of the Indian Industrial Commission and the Acworth Committee. The Fiscal Commission, among other things, had recommended the appointment of a Tariff Board to examine what industries needed any protection or bounty, and how best to offer it. Agreeably to this recommendation a Tariff Board was

appointed in 1922, with Sir George Rainey, Sir P. P. Ginwalla and Prof. V. G. Kalé as members, and the question of giving some amount of protective bounty to the steel industry was referred to it. This Board, after a very searching enquiry, recommended a bounty, and the government, having accepted the proposal, embodied the recommendation in an official bill which was passed by the Assembly in 1924.

The re-constituted Assembly also turned down all proposals for imperial preference and reciprocity, and even went to the extent of accepting a resolution for some measure of retaliation against the South African Union for its iniquitous treatment of Indian settlers within its territories.<sup>1</sup>

The Racial Distinctions Bill, which sought to put an end to the exclusive claims which Europeans in India had enjoyed for more than a century, to the detriment of the interests of justice, was passed by the Central Legislature in its winter session of 1923. This Act was essentially a piece of compromise legislation, intended to level up the Indian to the special position of the European before the eyes of the law, while it also reduced or abolished some of the latter's privileges. Under the new law first-class Indian Magistrates have been empowered to try Europeans, and *vice versa*, and District and Session Judges have been placed in a position to sentence an European offender even to capital punishment. In a jury case involving racial considerations, the accused can now claim a majority of his own countrymen on the jury, and an appeal lies to the High Court. Provisions have been added by which the right of Habeas Corpus is extended to all persons, including Indians.

In the first few years, the Assembly made an honest attempt to broaden the basis of the constitution, both by a structural change in the Act of 1919, and by the establishment of parliamentary conventions, and though this attempt was impeded by party differences again and again, a very liberal interpretation was put on many of the important provisions

<sup>1</sup> At this time there was pending in the South African Union Legislature, a measure entitled the Class Areas Bill which was intended to segregate Indians in particular locations within the Union territories. This Bill was latterly dropped on the change of Government in the Union.

of the Act, until the popular will came into sharp conflict with executive authorities.

The efforts of the Central Legislature to widen the new constitution were checked as soon as a new Secretary of State for India and a new Viceroy had been installed firmly in their offices. Mr. Montagu, failing to receive Mr. Lloyd George's nomination for the Indian viceroyalty,<sup>1</sup> as the successor of Lord Chelmsford, sent out to India an ex-Lord Chief Justice of England, in the hope and confidence that he would prove the best pilot to guide the new craft of the Indian State through the uncharted waters during the transitional period of the Reforms. Lord Reading certainly proved a very cautious pilot, but none too brave or wise. In 1922, he had before him the unique privilege of filling up vacancies in the governorships of Burma, Assam, Bihar and the United Provinces. To none of these, however, did he think it wise or just to appoint an Indian gentleman, as his predecessor, Lord Chelmsford, had done to Bihar and Orissa.

This reluctance of the new Viceroy to continue the policy of his predecessor was naturally interpreted by the people of India as a return to the policy of the old bureaucratic die-hards.<sup>2</sup> Lord Peel, who had succeeded Mr. Montagu as the Secretary of State for India, early in 1922, threw cold water over Indian hopes by his famous despatch of November, 1922, on the Assembly's demand for a further constitutional advance. These two gestures left no doubt in the people's mind that the new scheme of reforms indicated no real change of heart in our rulers, and this feeling received unmistakable corroboration when the duty on salt was doubled in the

<sup>1</sup> At one time Mr. Montagu was anxious to come out to India as the Viceroy to work out on the spot his own scheme of Reforms, and, at the instance of some of his Indian friends, an attempt was made to approach the British Premier with that object in view. Unfortunately the *Times* got scent of this news before the Premier could be approached, and in a leading article strongly opposed it, nipping the idea in the bud.

<sup>2</sup> The same story was repeated early this year when vacancies occurred in the governorships of Assam, Burma and the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. Lord Irwin, the present Viceroy, instead of offering any of these exalted offices to any Indian gentlemen, had all of them filled up by European officials, again showing that the angle of vision had not undergone any radical change.

Budget of 1922-23, with the Viceroy's certificate, with a view to meet a deficit of the year. The Indian people still hoped for better times to come, but these hopes were dashed when Lord Reading reshuffled the portfolios of the various members of his Cabinet in April, 1923, and placed no very important department in charge of any of the Indian Members; finance, railways, the control of the Civil Services, and commerce all being placed in charge of their European colleagues. Another opportunity offered itself to the Viceroy of proving the sincerity of the professed change of heart in our rulers. When Lord Reading went to England on leave in the summer of 1925, to confer with Lord Birkenhead on the Indian situation, Lord Lytton was appointed as his successor and Sir John Kerr was brought from Assam to act as Governor of Bengal in Lord Lytton's place. Usually in such cases, the senior member of the Executive Council is appointed to act for the Governor. But unfortunately in this case the claims of the Senior Member, Sir Abdur Rahim, were completely overlooked, as he happened to be an Indian gentleman. This showed unmistakably which way the wind blew.

With the changed attitude of the Viceroy, and with Anglo-Indian die-hardism reasserting its strength in the governance of the Empire, the weaknesses of the administration came prominently before the public eye. The cost of the civil administration had been greatly increased by the reforms; the cost of the military administration had gone up from twenty-five per cent of the total revenues of India before the War to nearly forty per cent after it. On the whole, the Imperial expenditure had mounted so high that, between the years 1919-23, the Government had to meet a deficit of over ninety crores of rupees<sup>1</sup> and to do so taxes were increased all round, burden after burden being piled on the poor taxpayer's shoulders. Mr. Montagu's policy in this

<sup>1</sup> The following deficits were shown in the Imperial Budget from 1919-23 :

1919-20	..	..	..	23½	crores.
1920-21	..	..	..	26	..
1921-22	..	..	..	27½	..
1922-23	..	..	..	15	..

matter was a sad contrast to the rigid financial economy exercised by John Morley in similar circumstances between 1906-09.

The staggering increase in the military expenditure of the country which had reached in 1921-22 the sum of nearly seventy crores of rupees, gave the Indians a peep into the mind of their alien rulers, and into the dangers of a super-imposed foreign government. When India was denuded of the greater portion of her troops for the various theatres of the war, no attempt was made by our rulers to create a large number of battalions and regiments out of the people of this country for the purpose of keeping internal and domestic peace and garrisoning the frontiers. This unwillingness to depend on the valour of Indians for the defence of India was due principally to a policy of mistrust and apprehension, and received further corroboration when Commander-in-Chief after Commander-in-Chief resisted with all his might and force all her proposals for the creation of new territorial or auxiliary forces for a second line of defence or for the establishment of an Indian Sandhurst. In her halcyon days, Rome committed the same mistake, and paid a penalty which has not been overlooked by great historians.

Discussing the institution in Gaul of representative councils after the withdrawal of the legions from Britain, Gibbon wrote: "If such an institution, which gave the people an interest in their own Government, had been universally established by Trajan and the Antonines, the needs of public wisdom and virtue might have been cherished and propagated in the Empire of Rome. The privileges of the subject would have secured the throne of the monarch; the abuses of an arbitrary administration might have been prevented in some degree or corrected by the interposition of these representative assemblies; and the country would have been defended against a foreign enemy by the arms of natives and freemen. Under the mild and generous influence of liberty the Roman Empire might have remained immortal."

If the defence of a country and a country so poor, so helpless, so insanitary and ignorant as India requires forty per cent of its revenues for the Army alone, what hope can she cherish of getting into line with the other civilized nations of the world in all departments of national well-being? What a pity that Lord Reading's government did not realize the wisdom of John Morley's famous dictum that "in a poor country like India economy is as much an element of defence as guns and forts".

The top-heavy Indian administration, in spite of the fact that Lord Reading succeeded in balancing the Imperial Budget after four years of very heavy deficits, has now been discovered to be a menace to the country, and all who realize the condition of the Indian people are alarmed at the situation. Lord Inchcape's Retrenchment Committee, which reported early in 1924, was able to suggest many cuts, including a sum of nearly twenty crores of rupees on military expenditure, but even with their recommendations and the Government's best efforts to give effect to some of them, the public expenditure of India remains disproportionately high in comparison with some of the most advanced states in Asia and Europe.

We have so far directed our attention to the position of the Central Government which still remains impervious to the new spirit, but it is in the provinces where the sincerity of the Montford Reforms has been very carefully tested and challenged. By the Act of 1919, a system of dual government has been established in the provinces under the name of dyarchy. By this system some of the departments of the State have been "reserved" for administration by members of the Executive Council, while the other departments have been "transferred" to the control of the legislatures which have been entrusted to administer them through Ministers appointed by the Crown, but paid and controlled by the Councils.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Bengal, Education, Sanitation, Industries and Local Self-Government, were the principal departments which have been transferred to the portfolios of Ministers, while Law, Police, Justice and the Services have been "reserved".

As soon as the new system was put into operation it broke down, particularly in Bengal. In the provinces the police expenditure bulks more largely than the expenditure on education and sanitation. The Police Budget can be voted on by the Council, but, being included in a "reserved" portfolio, and the Governor having been endowed with emergency powers, he can, by a certificate, restore all such demands for grants under this head as fail to receive the assent of the Council. Lord Ronaldshay on two occasions and Lord Lytton thrice, exercised this prerogative of restoring such grants lost in the Council. If, as in the United Provinces, the department of Police had been put in the portfolio of an Indian Member of the Executive Council, perhaps the new experiment might have been taken more kindly by the people of Bengal. But unfortunately in Bengal as in most other Indian provinces, the police service and administration has been placed in charge of a European Member of the Executive Council, thus indicating the want of confidence of the provincial satraps in their Indian colleagues and the unwillingness of the bureaucracy to part with real power. The impression has thus been created in the public mind that the "reforms" have hardly succeeded in changing, as it was suspected that they were never intended to change, the character of the administration or the hearts of the rulers.

Two points brought out the defects of dyarchy in prominent relief at this time. A large number of Civil Servants began to cut at the root of this new experiment by showing an intentional discourtesy and disrespect to the Indian Ministers placed at the head of certain departments of the administration under the new Act. They resented having to carry out the wishes and decrees of Indian Ministers, and also having lost the powers of initiative in the transferred departments. They were unwilling to work as subordinate officers of an Indian legislature. The open revolt of the Civil Service and its extreme reluctance to work out the Reforms in a spirit of frank co-operation with the provincial legislatures became so pronounced a feature of the situation, that nearly a fifth of its European cadre had resigned and retired from

the Service on proportionate pension before the new experiment has been well planted in the soil. Among those who remained some had shown their attitude to the Indian Ministers by violating ordinary rules of discipline and courtesy.<sup>1</sup>

The second matter on which people began to lose faith in dyarchy was the unwillingness of Governors to take the Indian Ministers into their confidence in the disposal of serious and grave administrative questions and in the initiation of new policies. The joint deliberation of such questions in a united Cabinet, broadly recommended in the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee which considered Mr. Montagu's Bill of 1919, hardly ever materialized in any province and was honoured more in the breach than in the observance. In Bengal, when there were grave riots at Chandpur<sup>2</sup> and on occasions when new repressive measures

<sup>1</sup> Owing to acute difference and friction with some of the permanent officials of the Superior Services, two Ministers in the United Provinces, one in the Punjab, and one in Bihar found themselves compelled to resign their offices before the expiry of their term.

<sup>2</sup> The Chandpur riots occurred out of long standing grievances of the coolies (labourers) in the tea-gardens of Assam. Indentured labour obtained throughout Assam before the system was abolished early this century by the humanitarian efforts of one of its Chief Commissioners, Sir Henry Cotton. With the abolition of indentured labour, the condition of the Assam coolies improved legally no doubt, but not socially or economically. Till the day of the riots referred to, the poor coolie remained under the heel and at the mercy of his white employer. Early in May, 1921, the coolies of many tea-gardens in Assam went on strike and left the tea-gardens in large numbers for Karimgunge, a Sub-divisional headquarters in the district of Sylhet.

The people of the locality, out of sympathy for their condition, looked after their food and shelter and were making arrangements for their repatriation. But the railway authorities refused to issue tickets to them, with the idea that they would be compelled to return to the gardens. But they refused to submit to this coercion and preferred to starve rather than go back to the fields of their labour where they would have to earn their daily bread with tears of blood again. Later on, the railway authorities removed the ban against them, and the coolies came in large numbers to Chandpur, where an epidemic of cholera broke out among them.

The Congress Committee, in the meantime, was making arrangements for their relief and repatriation, and under the plea of keeping law and order a large number of these coolies were mercilessly assaulted by Gurkha soldiers on the midnight of May 20th. The result was a conflagration which sent Bengal into white heat. At this stage Chitta Ranjan went to Chandpur personally and supervised, so far as he could, the relief of their distress and their repatriation, the government looking upon the matter all the time with callous indifference.



were enforced, the Indian Ministers of the Crown were hardly ever consulted. In Bengal during the height of the non-co-operative movement, when hundreds of young students were arrested under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and even when Srimati Basanti Devi (C. R. Das's wife) and some of her women compatriots were arrested in Calcutta in December, 1921, for hawking *khaddar*, the Indian Ministers were kept in complete ignorance of these official designs.

The most pungent matter which troubled the Bengali mind in 1923, was, however, the attitude of Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea, a Minister of the Crown, towards important public questions, and of Sir Pravas Chandra Mitter, another Minister, in relation to the University of Calcutta and higher education in Bengal. During the years of his office as Minister, Sir Surendra Nath had gone back on the dearest principles of his earlier public life and almost uniformly supported the bureaucracy, of which he was once the greatest enemy and unsparing critic. Before taking office this leader of the people had "for well nigh half a century assailed the heavens with the thunders of his splendid oratory in indignation at the burning wrongs of his people". In these three years the intoxicating fumes of power and authority had made a complete wreck of this erstwhile tribune of the people. Under the spell of office, he supported the white rulers in flouting public opinion all along the line and in suppressing the popular will and popular aspirations in all crucial questions. During this period, Sir Surendra Nath had stoutly resisted the reduction of the salaries of Ministers in Bengal, a point on which Indian opinion was very keen, had without discrimination gone into the lobby with the Government in all important divisions in the Council, had callously treated the great disaster which overwhelmed the people of Northern Bengal in September, 1922, by an unprecedented flood, had imposed a fee on poor outdoor patients who visited the public hospitals and dispensaries maintained by the money of the taxpayer, and, above all, he acted most unpatriotically, merely to save his office, by incorporating an unwarranted

provision for communal representation in his Calcutta Municipal Act of 1923.

And as for Sir Pravas Chandra Mitter, he had already submitted two bills to the Government of India, for its sanction, both drafted over the head of and without the knowledge of the Senate of the University of Calcutta and intended to departmentalize it and destroy its autonomy and academic freedom, sometimes on the plea of finance, and sometimes on the plea of setting right the defects of the constitution of its Senate and Syndicate.

The next most important handicap under which dyarchy started in the provinces was that the Ministers in charge of nation-building departments were not entrusted with more money than the bureaucrats had themselves spent on those departments when they held undivided sway before the Reforms. People had frequently asked: if our Ministers have no more money, without additional taxation or loans, to spend on education and sanitation than the old Government, and if the Ministers are powerless to protect the people from executive highhandedness and wrong doing and from the regulation *lathis* of the police, what is the good of the new scheme? It brings us no relief, takes us no further on the road of self-government, gives us no more security of life and property and only adds to our burdens. If dyarchy only means new taxes and new loans, and more money spent on the bureaucracy and the police, we were better left alone. The Reforms therefore showed clever window dressing, with hardly any new stock or any structural changes.

While a volume of undisputed evidence was gathered on the defects of dyarchy and the other main provisions of the Montagu Act, Chitta Ranjan Das and the Government of India looked at them from two absolutely different points of view. Chitta Ranjan made it the work of his life to end the Reforms, while the Government wanted to mend them. With this aim in view, a Committee was appointed by the Government in August, 1924, to examine carefully the defects of the Montagu constitution and to make recommendations with a view to rectify, if necessary, any administrative

imperfections in the light of the evidence produced before it. Sir Alexander Muddiman, Home Member, presided over it, and the Committee included three Europeans, the Indian Law Member of the time, Sir Mian Mohamed Shafi and five non-official Indians. The Indian Members excepting the Maharaja of Burdwan, who joined the official group, constituted the minority of the Committee and consisted of Sir Sivaswamy Iyer, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr. Paranjpye and Mr. E. A. Jinnan. The minority of the Committee submitted a strong and separate report, in which they held that no improvement of the situation was possible without a structural alteration of the constitution itself. But they were precluded from considering this position by the terms of reference of this Committee. In some matters they agreed with the majority and they both recommended that the control of the Secretary of State on matters affecting purely Indian interests should be relaxed ; that joint deliberation between the two halves of the Provincial Governments should be definitely enjoined and enforced by a change in the devolution rules ; that the Ministers' salaries should be fixed by statute at a minimum of three-fifths of the salary of an Executive Councillor ; that the Finance Minister of any provincial government should not be placed in charge of any main spending department, and that Members and Ministers should be given enhanced powers of reappropriation. Among other recommendations of the minority were included such proposals as the abolition of the official block in the Councils, the formulation of a definite scheme of Indianization of the Army, and the limitation of the certification powers of the Governor-General.

Thus far went the report of the Muddiman committee, but Chitta Ranjan on the other hand wanted no patchwork reforms but the abolition of the entire scheme of dyarchy, the corner-stone on which the Government of India Act is based, in order that the entire onus of misgovernment might be fixed upon the bureaucracy alone. To do this, his path was clear. He had only to go to the Council with a large following, offer a continuous and consistent opposition to the

Government, and obstruct all official measures and appropriations, right or wrong.

If the object of the Nationalists was to attain complete self-government in a short time, they could not have committed a greater blunder than by boycotting the Councils in the elections of 1920. In their anxiety to offer an effective obstruction to the Government and to clog the wheels of the existing administration, the non-co-operating Nationalists proved rather short-sighted. They mortgaged the future of India to achieve a temporary and histrionic effect. If they had taken advantage of their presence in the Councils, in 1921, as they did afterwards in the elections of 1923, the leaders of the new movement would have forced the pace of responsible government to their heart's desire from the very beginning of the reconstituted Councils. But their absence from the first Council under the new constitution did incalculable harm in the cause of Indian progress, and did not allow the people to get a glimpse of the defects of dyarchy in good time.

Chitta Ranjan was the first lieutenant of Mr. Gandhi to see the error of his chief's ways, and the effects of a very heavy draught of somnolent reaction to which the Indian nation had been subjected during the last three years. He made up his mind if not actually to go back upon Mr. Gandhi's programme, at least, as he was quite sure now that it would lead them nowhere, to enter the Councils with a large number of followers and offer an effective opposition to the bureaucracy from within the Council.

If a successful revolution was unthinkable, if physical resistance did not enter into practical politics, if the voluntary abandonment or withdrawal of the rule of the British was mere moon-shine, if a consistent life of detachment and renunciation could not get us a place in the sun, then the only possible way in which India could be put on the road to Swaraj was by pursuing a policy of consistent and persistent obstruction of all measures initiated by the existing bureaucracy and thereby forcing the pace of the Reforms.

And this was in short the ideal which inspired Chitta

Ranjan Das to wage a relentless war against dyarchy from his vantage ground within the Council, and establish the Swaraj Party. Chitta Ranjan gauged the situation correctly by taking a lesson out of the pages of modern Irish history and pursuing a policy first initiated at St. Stephen's by Charles Stewart Parnell, before and after the Phoenix Park murders in Dublin.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE SWARAJ PARTY, ITS FOUNDATION AND ITS EARLY LABOURS

WE have already mentioned that Chitta Ranjan first attended the Indian National Congress in 1906 as a delegate. From that year till 1917, he kept outside the Congress, watching its chequered fortune as a mere spectator. In 1917, he took a leading part in the election of Mrs. Besant as its President, and also joined its deliberations as an enthusiastic delegate. From that time forward, Chitta Ranjan threw himself heart and soul into this national movement, and attended every session of the Congress from 1917 up to the one held at Belgaum, under the presidency of Mr. Gandhi himself, in December, 1924. He was elected President of the Ahmedabad session of the Congress held in December, 1921, but as he had been arrested a few days before under the Criminal Law Amendment Act and was awaiting his trial, he was precluded from the honour and privilege of guiding its deliberations.

While he was in prison, his advice was sought for by the leaders of the Congress, particularly by Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya, when he opened up negotiations in Calcutta with Lord Reading for a round table conference to discuss and settle the terms of the future constitution of India and the fate of the interned prisoners. Unfortunately, Mr. Gandhi, who was referred to by Chitta Ranjan as the ultimate arbiter of the matter, laid down the condition that no pourparlers with the Viceroy could be opened until all the men interned previously for political offences, including Mohamed Ali, the leader of the Khilafat Movement and his brother Shaukat Ali, had been released and set free—a condition which Lord Reading refused to accept. Chitta Ranjan till the end of his

days regretted Mr. Gandhi's conditions and the consequent failure of the Reading-Malaviya negotiations.

During his six months' confinement in the Central Jail at Alipore, Chitta Ranjan was given ample opportunity by the Government to discuss public questions with such leaders and friends as he wished to meet. His room in the jail—a complete and large flat all by itself—soon proved to be a favourite pilgrimage of all political and public men of the Nationalist school, and almost every other day he used to hold a political durbar with his friends and lieutenants, a large number of whom were living on the ground floor as prisoners gathered from every part of Bengal. During this period he took lessons from a fellow-prisoner, Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, in moral philosophy and metaphysics. He occupied himself also in writing a discourse on the Vaishnav poets of Bengal, a history of Indian Nationalism, and a dictionary of the Bengali language. Unfortunately none of these tasks was ever finished. The Government allowed his wife and his relatives to send his meals to him from their family residence, and friends from outside used to overwhelm him with their hospitality by sending him dainties in abundance. After doing justice to them himself, he would distribute the surplus amongst his fellow political prisoners,<sup>1</sup> a function in which he took a singular delight.

About the middle of his term of imprisonment Mr. Gandhi was clapped into prison by an unhappy prosecution instituted by Sir George Lloyd and his conviction and sentence created a profound disillusionment in the public mind, as it was widely believed that no Government could or would touch the great Indian saint. With Mr. Gandhi's incarceration his influence began to wane all over the country. About this time Chitta Ranjan broached to his fellow prisoners the idea of Congressmen going into the Councils, and men like Syam Sunder Chakravarti, who was also then in the Alipore Jail, entered into a very bitter controversy with him over this matter.

<sup>1</sup> Among those who were in prison with Chitta Ranjan in the Central Jail at this time were Subhas Chandra Bose, Syam Sunder Chakravarti, Jitendralal Banerjea, Badshah Meah, Abul Kalam Azad, and Chand Meah.



SIR ASHUTOSH MOOKERJEE  
The Great Educationist of Young Bengal  
Born June, 1864. Died 1924

*By permission of Messrs. Johnston and Hoffman, Calcutta]*





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Chitta Ranjan came out of jail in July, 1922, and in his reply to the many public addresses which he received in Calcutta and elsewhere on his release, he made perfectly clear to the people his intention of going into the Council, though he made no definite or pronounced statements on the matter till he delivered his inaugural address as President of the Congress at Gaya in December, 1922.

In this remarkable address, he first advanced his proposal to depart from Mr. Gandhi's programme on a very crucial issue, and boldly made a bid for entry into the Councils. Unfortunately for the Congress, this part of his message fell on deaf ears, and there did not appear to be more than two dozen delegates at Gaya who could be induced to give their support to Chitta Ranjan's scheme of non-co-operating with the Government from within the Councils. But Chitta Ranjan was not the man to be daunted by opposition or cold neglect. He made Gaya the starting point of a new campaign, and before the delegates dispersed at the close of the session, he had established the Swarajya Party with a few friends for the propagation of his idea of going into the Councils. He started this campaign on no flowing tide; every current was against him. He could not count even on a good Press. But having put his hand to the plough he was not the man to turn back. On his return to Calcutta early in 1923, he made the organization of the Swarajya Party the sole object of his life.

A few weeks after Chitta Ranjan began his first effort in Calcutta on behalf of his newly created Swaraj Party and was arranging to move heaven and earth to get a foothold for his party in Bengal, a rash move of Lord Lytton came to him as a godsend. The differences between the Governor and the Education Minister on the one side, and Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee the Vice-Chancellor and the Senate of the University of Calcutta on the other, over the drafts of an amending University Bill, having come to a head, Lord Lytton in a moment of great indiscretion took it into his head to try and purchase Sir Ashutosh's co-operation with his Government by alternate threatening and cajolery. Lord Lytton offered

him a fresh term of Vice-Chancellorship on certain conditions. The letter in which this offer was made by the Governor was so outrageously insulting and couched in such blunt and indecorous phraseology that it gave a rude shock to the educated public in Bengal when it was published. In this letter, dated March 24th, 1923, Lord Lytton said :

“ The continuance of the course you have followed during the last few months would entirely preclude my favouring your reappointment. Hitherto you have given me no help : you have on the contrary used every expedient to oppose us. Your criticisms have been destructive ; you have misrepresented our objects and motives and instead of coming to me as your friend and Chancellor with helpful suggestions for the improvement of our Bill, you have inspired articles in the Press to discredit the Government, you have appealed to Sir Michael Sadler, to the Government of India, and the Government of Assam to oppose our Bill. All this has been the action not of a fellow-worker anxious to improve the conditions of co-operation between the Government and the University, but of an opponent of the maintenance of any connection between the two. I should not complain of this if you declared yourself an open antagonist and said to me frankly : ‘ In the interest of the University I am obliged to oppose your policy and cannot co-operate with you ’. But in that case, you could not expect the Government to retain you as a colleague and ask you to continue as Vice-Chancellor.

. . . . .

“ I invite you at this time when the Vice-Chancellor's Office must be filled anew—a time which is also one of momentous consequences to the University—to assure me that you will exchange an attitude of opposition for one of whole-hearted assistance, for in our co-operation lies the only chance of securing public funds for the University without impairing its academic freedom.

If you will do this, if you will work with us as a colleague and trust to your power of persuasion to get what you consider the defects in our Bill amended, if you can give an assurance that you will not work against the Government or seek the aid of other agencies to defeat our Bill, then I am prepared to seek the concurrence of my Minister to your re-appointment as Vice-Chancellor, and if you cannot conscientiously do this you must make yourself free to oppose me by ceasing to be Vice-Chancellor."

Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee, who was at this time thinking of retiring from the Bench of the High Court of Calcutta and devoting the rest of his days to political work, found this a splendid opportunity to enter the lists with his Excellency and show him his real opinion. In spurning Lord Lytton's insulting offer, Sir Ashutosh referred to his unmerited imputations.

"You complain that I have hitherto given you no help. I maintain I have constantly offered you my help and advice which, for reasons best known to you alone, you have not accepted. I have written to you letter after letter—even in the midst of terrible sorrows—commenting in detail on the provisions of the Bills. You have never cared to reply to the criticisms thus expressed.

"Again you do not hesitate to assert that I have inspired articles in the press to discredit your Government. This is a libel and I challenge you to produce evidence in support of this unfounded allegation.

"I notice that you charge me with having misrepresented your objects and motives. I most emphatically repudiate this unfounded charge. On the other hand, it would be interesting to know whether when you stated to the Legislative Council that your 'anxiety to consult the authorities of the University and to obtain

their support as far as possible, was responsible for the delay', you were already aware of the attitude taken up by the Government of India. If you have the courage to publish to the world all the documents on the subject and the entire correspondence which has passed between us, I shall cheerfully accept the judgment of an impartial public.

" But I claim that I have acted throughout in the best interests of the University notwithstanding formidable difficulties and obstacles and that I have uniformly tried to save your Government from the pursuit of a radically wrong course—though my advice has not been heeded. I am not surprised that neither you nor your Minister can tolerate me. You assert that you want us to be men. You have one before you, who can speak and act fearlessly according to his convictions, and you are not able to stand the sight of him. It may not be impossible for you to secure the service of a subservient Vice-Chancellor, prepared always to carry out the mandates of your Government and to act as a spy on the Senate. He may enjoy the confidence of your Government, but he will not certainly enjoy the confidence of the Senate and the public of Bengal. We shall watch with interest the performances of a Vice-Chancellor of this type creating a new tradition for the office.

" I send you without hesitation the only answer which an honourable man can send—an answer which you and your advisers expect and desire. I decline the insulting offer you have made to me.

Yours sincerely,

ASHUTOSH MOOKERJEE.

" His Excellency the Earl of Lytton, G.C.I.E."

The correspondence, when published, gave Bengal food for thought about the terms on which the Government wanted the people to co-operate with it, and the insolent manner in

which a Governor could write to one of His Majesty's most distinguished Indian subjects. A large volume of public opinion at once veered round to the Swaraj Party, as co-operation on Lord Lytton's terms was found most insulting to their self respect. At this time, Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee and Chitta Ranjan Das were concerting a joint measure of opposition to paralyse all sinister attempts to rob the University of Calcutta of its academic freedom. Strengthened by the moral support of Sir Ashutosh and by his undertaking that, on his retirement from the Bench, he would come and work with the Swarajya Party, Chitta Ranjan went about the country with renewed hope and confidence for the propagation of the new gospel and raised a raging agitation on behalf of his new creed. He knew no rest or peace and passed sleepless nights over his campaign, and such was the magic power of his personality and his persuasive tongue that within six or seven months time, he had induced a large number of non-co-operating Congressmen to accept his new programme.

In September, 1923, a special session of the Congress met at Delhi under the presidency of Mr. Mohamed Ali, the President-elect of the Cohanada Congress, to discuss what attitude the Congress should take regarding the new dogma of entering the Councils. Mr. Mohamed Ali was easily won over by Chitta Ranjan to give his qualified support to the Swarajya scheme and to get for it from within the stone walls of the Poona jail the occult assent of Mr. Gandhi.<sup>1</sup> The whole of educated India was surprised to find the special session of the Congress at Delhi giving Mr. Das's scheme its tacit acquiescence, and allowing him and his friends to go into the Councils if they liked. The exact wording of the Delhi resolution runs as follows :

“ While reaffirming its adherence to the principle of non-co-operation this Congress declares that such

<sup>1</sup> In his address to the Congress Maulana Mohamed Ali informed his audience that though he had had no opportunity of consulting Mr. Gandhi personally in this matter, he had received a psychic message from the Poona jail intimating to him Mr. Gandhi's assent to Das's proposals.

Congressmen as have no religious or other conscientious objection against entering the legislatures are at liberty to stand as candidates and to exercise the right of voting at the forthcoming elections, and this Congress therefore suspends all propaganda against entering Councils. The Congress at the same time calls upon all Congressmen to double their efforts to carry out the constructive programme of their great Leader, Mahatma Gandhi, and by united endeavour to achieve Swaraj at the earliest possible moment."

With this permission in his pocket, Chitta Ranjan returned to Calcutta, and made arrangements to capture as many seats as possible in the local council for his party at the general election of November of that year. In this effort he was greatly helped by the advocacy of the *Bengalee*<sup>1</sup> which of all newspapers in the province had taken up his cause with a singular enthusiasm, and later on by his new organ *Forward* which was founded only a few weeks before the general election. He put forward as many as fifty-seven Hindu and Mahomedan candidates for the seats open to election, and raised and borrowed more than thirty thousand rupees to defray the expenses of his nominees. As a result of the election, Chitta Ranjan came into the Bengal Council with forty members, the Swarajya Party having been returned as the largest single party in the new Council. The most striking feat of Chitta Ranjan in this election was not, however, the return of so many Swarajyst candidates, as the signal defeat he was able to inflict on the late Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea, an ex-Minister, and Mr. S. R. Das, Chitta Ranjan's first cousin and now the Law Member of the Government of India. In the Central Provinces the Swarajya Party was returned with a majority in the Council, but failed to meet with good luck in Bombay, Madras, Assam and Lahore. In the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh the

<sup>1</sup> The *Bengalee* was at this time being edited by the writer of this memoir, who succeeded Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea in that office on the 1st January, 1921.

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party met with slight reverses at the polls, though some of its leaders had easy walkovers as candidates for the local council and the Indian Legislative Assembly. But the successes of the Swaraj Party in Bengal, the Central Provinces and elsewhere, gave Chitta Ranjan a unique position in the country as the leader of the new Party.

As the constitutional head of the new Government in Bengal, Lord Lytton sent for Mr. Das and requested him to form the Ministry for the administration of the "transferred" departments. Das took a little time to consider his Excellency's proposal and to consult his party. On December 16th, 1923, he sent the following refusal to Lord Lytton.

" 148, Russa Road South,  
" Calcutta.  
" 16.12.23.

" Your Excellency,

" I placed before our Party the position as explained by your Excellency and they have just decided not to accept your Excellency's kind offer. The members of this Party are pledged to do everything in their power by using the legal right granted under the Reforms Act to put an end to the system of Dyarchy. This duty they cannot discharge if they take office. The Party is aware that it is possible to offer obstruction from within by accepting office, but they do not consider it honest to accept office, which is under the existing system in your Excellency's gift, and then turn it into an instrument of obstruction. The awakened consciousness of the people of this country demands a change in the present system of Government and until that is done or unless there is some change in the general situation, indicating a change of heart, the people of this country cannot offer willing co-operation. Under the circumstances, I regret I cannot undertake responsibility regarding the Transferred Departments. My Party, however, wishes to place on record their



appreciation of the spirit of constitutionalism which actuated your Excellency in making the offer which they feel bound not to accept.

“ I have the honour to be,

“ Your Excellency's most obedient servant,

“ C. R. DAS,

“ President, Swarajya Party.”

With this refusal, a new chapter in the history of the Swarajya Party began. Chitta Ranjan tried, and succeeded almost at once, in forming a coalition with the “ National Party ”, which was formed for the first time as an Independent group, taking its place between the Liberals on the one side, and the Swarajists on the other.

In the meantime, Das was organizing a large volume of opinion in his favour for the acceptance of his creed at Cocanada. He realized that if non-co-operating Congressmen, who still formed the predominant party and voice in the Congress, threw out his scheme, he would be nowhere and lose all the influence and position that he had so far been able to acquire. Here again, as good luck would have it, he was able to carry the President of the Congress with him, and thanks to his support and friendly interest, Das was able to secure the indirect blessings of the Congress. The Congress at Cocanada decided to take up a negative course in this matter and not to offer any opposition to the Swarajya Party or to put any obstruction in its way. With this changed attitude of the Congress the public realized that Chitta Ranjan had completely wrested the rudder from the helmsman of the Congress and was beginning to steer the craft into the charted waters of well-defined public life. From this time forward, the Swarajya Party began to absorb public attention and command the respect of all groups of political Parties in and outside the walls of the various Council Chambers.

Thus strengthened, Chitta Ranjan began his new crusade against the bureaucracy by voting against the salaries of Ministers, and against the principal items of the Budget of the year. Twice in 1924 and once in 1925, Chitta Ranjan

was able to throw out all the proposals for either the appointment of Ministers or the payment of any salaries to them. In June, 1924, after the first motion for the demand of a grant for Ministers' salaries had been thrown out the Governor sought to give the Bengal Legislative Council another opportunity to reconsider its decision on the appointment of Ministers. Chitta Ranjan and his friends took the wind out of the sails of the Government and obtained an injunction from the High Court of Calcutta to restrain the President from putting the proposed official resolution to the Council on the appointed day, with the result that the statutory rules of the Legislature were revised by a special modification from the Government of India to allow of a second application for a vote. This motion, after the necessary change in the rules had been made, came for discussion in the Council in August and was defeated by a large majority. In a speech in the Bengal Legislative Council over a similar motion in March, 1925, Chitta Ranjan defined the position of the Swarajya Party very clearly. He said :

“ It has been said that our cry is Destroy, destroy. That our only point is destruction betrays such an utter ignorance of the Swarajist position that it is difficult to reply to it. Why do we want to destroy ? What do we want to get rid of ? We want to destroy and get rid of a system which does no good and can do no good. We want to destroy it, because we want to construct a system which can be worked with success and will enable us to do good to the masses. Can you lay your hands on your breast and say that you can do anything for the masses under this system ? What have you yourselves done ? It was tried for three long years with Sir Provash Chunder Mitter as one of the Ministers. May I ask in what way the condition of the masses has been improved ? Has there been more education ? Have they grown into anything ? Has the province been better off financially ? No. You have not got the power. And not having the power, you know that you can do no good in the present circumstances. It is a sham business altogether. On the one hand, the Ministers are Ministers endowed with responsibility and power

and so on, but without funds they cannot do anything. So these nation-building departments are made over to the Ministers, but the question of funds is in the hands of the reserved side, which can starve the nation-building departments just as it likes, and when the people say that nothing has been done for them in the way of nation-building schemes Government can always turn round and say, 'There are your Ministers'."

Early in 1925 again, when he was lying very seriously ill, he went from his sick bed to the Council Chamber to drive the last nail into the coffin of dyarchy and write an epitaph on it. His presence in the Council Chamber, where he was carried in the arms of his friends, brought round to his fold all the waverers, and created an electric atmosphere within the walls of the Council. When the Chairman declared the result of the voting it was found that the Government had suffered the defeat of the season, and as a consequence of this vote, Lord Lytton was compelled to divide between himself and the member of the Executive Council the administration of the Transferred Departments. And from this time forward Chitta Ranjan Das became an awful portent of danger and a lion in the path of the Indian bureaucracy.

In 1924 Chitta Ranjan Das had set out on another big enterprise. The new Calcutta Municipal Act, passed in the Council in 1923, was to come into operation in April of this year with a largely widened franchise and an entirely new constitution. Chitta Ranjan set his heart on capturing the Corporation with members of his own party and his nominees. This was a tremendous venture, as Calcutta, like all metropolitan cities, was an extremely conservative place, and hardly likely to fall in with extreme views of any kind. Yet Chitta Ranjan's organization was so complete and the conservative elements were so disorganized that at the polls, on the day of election, Calcutta was found to have been converted to his views. At the first election of the new Corporation, out of seventy-five elected members nearly fifty-five were returned from the Swaraj Party, and at the first meeting of the new Corporation Chitta Ranjan Das was

elected its first Mayor. This capture of the Municipal corporation of the premier city of the province gave a unique position of power and authority to the Swaraj Party as well as to its founder and leader.

In 1917, in his address to the Bengal Provincial Conference, Chitta Ranjan had put forward an eloquent plea against Bengal being drawn into the meshes of modern industrial and factory life. He then laid down the dictum that "if we seek to establish industrialism in our land we shall be laying down with our own hands the road to our destruction". But in 1923 and 1924 Chitta Ranjan had forgotten this and placed himself at the head of the Trade Union movements. For the first time in the economic history of India wage-earners and factory operatives were organizing themselves to protect and defend their interests against capitalistic tyranny.<sup>1</sup> At the All-India Trade Union Congress held at Lahore, in 1923, he acted as the president of the session, and, in his address to this body, he enunciated very clearly his views regarding factory legislations and industrial organization. Next year, the Workmen's Compensation Act was passed in the Indian Legislative Council, guaranteeing some sort of an insurance against the risks and dangers of factory life. The following year he presided over the session of the Trade Union Congress in Calcutta, but, unfortunately, got mixed up with a faction which for some time paralysed the activities of the movement. The Swarajya Party and some of its prominent leaders helped to widen the breach in the ranks of this nascent organization, with the result that Trade Unionism and Labour organizations have failed so far to act as an instrument for the amelioration of the condition of the labouring class in Bengal.

From early in 1924, Chitta Ranjan had also engaged in a crusade of a very different kind. A great deal of discontent had found expression among the orthodox Hindu community against the maladministration of the shrine of Tarakeswar, in the district of Hoogly, and the iniquities of its head,

<sup>1</sup> The first Trade Union Congress of India was held in Bombay in 1921, and the second in the heart of the Tharia coalfields in 1922.

Mohunt Satish Giri. At the persuasion of friends from many parts of Bengal, and at the instance of Swami Viswananda, Satyagraha was declared at Tarakeswar, and Chitta Ranjan put himself at the head of this movement. Hundreds of young students from different districts of Bengal volunteered to break the law and trespass into the Mohunt's compound and interfere with his arrangements for the daily worship of the deity. Most of these young men, including Chitta Ranjan's only son, Chira Ranjan, were clapped into jail as trespassers and the fight was continued for several months. Before the year had drawn to a close, both parties were tired, and Chitta Ranjan came to an understanding with Mohunt Satish Giri by which the latter was to retire from the shrine and put all his property at the disposal of a trust, in the administration of which it was hoped Chitta Ranjan and the Swaraj Party would have a controlling hand. In this matter, Chitta Ranjan secured a Pyrrhic victory, as only a few weeks later, in consequence of a law suit, the whole property and shrine of Tarakeswar passed into the hands of an official receiver, both Satish Giri and the Swarajya Party retiring from the field.

Later, in January, 1926, Satish Giri obtained from the High Court of Calcutta a reversal of the judgment of the lower Court which had appointed a receiver over the entire property belonging to the estate. In this appeal, the High Court held that a large portion of the property in question belonged to Satish Giri personally and not to the shrine. So the Tarakeswar property is now owned by two proprietors, Satish Giri and the Public Trust in charge of the shrine now controlled by the official receiver. The Congress or the Swarajya party have now no locus standi anywhere in the affairs of the Tarakeswar shrine.

Chitta Ranjan's triumphs over the local Government on the issue of dyarchy, and the success of his earlier crusade against the Mohunt of Tarakeswar, and his capture of the Calcutta Corporation, gave the Swaraj Party a new accession of strength in the country ; and while still riding on the crest of this wave another gust of favourable wind came to his

sails. Early in 1924, at a riot occurring in Char Maniar, within the jurisdiction of the Madaripore subdivision of Faridpore, some police officers had been openly charged with assaulting and outraging Indian women, and a Congress worker belonging to the Swarajya Party was prosecuted by the Government for bringing this charge against the police. In November of the same year, at a Police Durbar held at Dacca, Lord Lytton attempted to put in a defence on behalf of the police in connection with the alleged Char Maniar outrages, and asumed that some of these women had stooped to cast aspersions on their own character just to spite the police.

This unchivalrous reference to the character of the women of Bengal gave the Swarajya Party an occasion to carry on a fresh political agitation in the country. Its leaders arranged for a monster protest meeting at the Town Hall against Lord Lytton's ugly innuendos, and they had excited such passion over the matter that nearly fifty thousand people assembled to attend this meeting. Instead of one meeting at the Town Hall, its organizers were compelled to improvise half a dozen overflow meetings on the steps and on the Maidan facing the Town Hall. Lord Lytton was compelled to offer an apology and an explanation, and a few days later Rabindra Nath Tagore came forward on behalf of the Governor with another quibbling statement which could neither explain nor justify Lord Lytton's unhappy suggestion. This outburst of national sentiment against the accredited representative of the Crown in Bengal won for the Swarajya Party a large place in the affections of the people, and secured for it a foremost and abiding place in the political and public life of the country.

## CHAPTER XV

### REPERCUSSIONS

THE murder by Gopi Nath Shah, a young Bengali in his teens, of Mr. Day, a European, in January, 1924, in a crowded and central thoroughfare of Calcutta, once again called attention to the festering sore which so far from having healed was infecting the whole body politic. Towards the end of Lord Curzon's vice-royalty a number of young Bengalis had raised a spectre of anarchy which could not be laid to rest. From its beginning the revolutionary movement had never been quite dormant. Right through the period, from 1905 to 1922, its leaders, failing to stir up trouble in India itself, were trying to secure the active sympathy and co-operation of foreign countries in engineering an armed rising. Some of these attempts have been described in a former chapter; a more detailed account of the activities may be found in the Report of the Rowlatt Committee of 1918.

After 1919 this movement received a set-back from Mahatma Gandhi's new campaign of non-violent non-co-operation. In the first three years of this new activity the revolutionary party was losing ground in Bengal, but after the Mahatma's incarceration in 1922 and the consequent decline of non-co-operation, some young men of Bengal once more began to dream that their national destiny could be realized only by following the methods of the Fenians in Ireland and the Nihilists in Russia. The collapse of Mahatma Gandhi's movement strengthened revolutionary tendencies in some Bengali minds, and in less than two years revolutionaries were again busy among the people of the country. There were murders in Calcutta and elsewhere; the bomb and the revolver were used to get rid of enemies and spies in

the revolutionary party. Sir Charles Tegart, Commissioner of Police in Calcutta, regarded by the revolutionaries as one of the greatest detective heads in the world, was at the time the object of Red Bengal's vengeance, and fortunately for him Gopi Nath Shah, who had been "commissioned" to murder him, took Mr. Day for him. The murderer was tried, but offered no defence, merely asseverating that though he had failed in his object someone else would succeed. The public, both European and Indian, was shocked both by the murder and by the indifferent and nonchalant attitude of Gopi Nath in the dock.

After he had paid the penalty of his crime, many of his friends and sympathizers, assembled at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Serajunge in the summer of 1924, inspired a resolution extolling his patriotism and self-sacrifice. What is more, they managed to persuade Chitta Ranjan Das to support it. The entire country was startled at this bare-faced approval of murder, and even Mr. Gandhi found himself drawn into the controversy to extenuate the language and spirit of the resolution, and to come to the rescue of the Swarajya Party, whose founder and leader had closely identified himself with the unfortunate wording and spirit of the resolution.

By this time, Chitta Ranjan Das had become aware of the fact that the revolutionary movement in Bengal, instead of being scotched, was burrowing underground far and wide, and, in one or two of his speeches at this period, he had taken the public into his confidence regarding his knowledge of their activities.

In October, 1924, the Government of Bengal found it no longer safe to ignore the recrudescence of revolutionary activities in the province, and had obtained the sanction of the Viceroy for the promulgation of an Ordinance to deal with crimes of this nature. Nearly eighty young men,<sup>1</sup> a large number belonging to the Swaraj Party, were interned without any definite charge or trial for suspected complicity with

<sup>1</sup> The number of persons arrested and detained under the Ordinance Law rose to nearly two hundred by the end of 1925.



revolutionary activities. Three of these men were very closely associated with Chitta Ranjan as his chief lieutenants in the Swaraj Party, one of them being Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose,<sup>1</sup> the Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation. Chitta Ranjan at once realized that this blow had been aimed at his growing influence in the country, and as a sort of vicarious punishment for the defeats he was able to inflict on the Government over the issue of dyarchy. He put up a strong fight at once against the new policy of repression, and did his best to defend his interned comrades from the cruel suspicion of the Government.

Speaking to a resolution in the Corporation of Calcutta against the unlawful arrest of its Chief Executive Officer, Chitta Ranjan made the following observations in his capacity as the Mayor of the City. "But the time has come now to condemn not only the violence of the people who are addicted to violent methods, but also the violence of the Government. This is a clear illustration of what I consider to be a violence on the part of Government. They have passed a law which is a lawless law.

"We protest against this Act, because it is destructive of the fundamental rights of man. To be taken and kept in custody for an indefinite period of time, without being told what evidence there is and without being brought to justice according to the law of the land, is a denial of the primary rights of humanity. This is 'lawless law'. Laws such as these were enacted in England in the days of the Stuart tyranny. And I am sorry to say that the Government of India to-day is not able to govern this land except by the use of violence. I really do not think that, when a revolutionary, in the enthusiasm of his heart, fires a pistol or throws a bomb, he is guilty of more violence than the Government. Violence begets violence. It is because of these acts of violence from the year 1907 down to the present day, acts of legislative violence, that I say, and I repeat it again, that revolutionary crimes have increased."

<sup>1</sup> Released for reasons of health by Sir Stanley Jackson, the new Governor of Bengal, on May 17, 1927.

After disclaiming any sympathy or faith in the dogmas of Red Bengal, Chitta Ranjan proceeded to observe :

“ But so far as their enthusiasm for liberty is concerned, I am with them. So far as their love of freedom is concerned, I am with them. If my suffering or struggle or every drop of my blood is necessary to achieve this freedom, I am ready.

“ Every honest man in this country is bound to say, ‘ I love my country, I love my freedom, I will have the right, the birthright, to manage my own affairs.’ . . .

“ If that is a crime, I plead guilty to the charge. If that is a crime, I am willing to be hanged for that rather than to shirk the duty which I feel to be the only duty of every Indian of the present day.”

The local Government, in the meantime, in anticipation of the automatic expiry of the period of the Ordinance at the end of six months, transferred its main provisions into a Bill entitled the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Bill, and Sir Hugh Stephenson, on January 7th, 1925, sought leave of the Bengal Legislative Council for its introduction. The necessary leave for the introduction of the Bill was refused by the Council by sixty-six votes against fifty-seven ; but Lord Lytton came to the rescue of the Government, and by exercising his powers of certificate put it on the statute book, on January 18th, for a period of five years.

A similar Bill was introduced into the Indian Legislative Assembly by Sir Alexander Muddiman, the Home Member, on March 23rd, 1925, as certain provisions of the Bengal Ordinance on the subject lay beyond the scope of the Bengal Legislature, such as those affecting the jurisdiction of the High Court and the territories outside Bengal. The Bill was thrown out by the Assembly, but was ultimately restored with the consent of the Council of State and the Viceroy.

When the Swarajya Party was being assailed from every quarter, both in England and India, for its open sympathy with political assassinations and murder, and when Chitta Ranjan Das found that this revolutionary movement was spreading, he took courage to come out with two strong and

definite statements against this movement in March and April, 1925. In a manifesto issued by him on March 29th, 1925, he made a bold attempt to remove the grave misapprehension created in the minds of Englishmen at home and Anglo-Indians in this country regarding the attitude of the Swarajya Party towards political assassinations and revolutionary activities. After strongly repudiating violence of any kind for the attainment of their political objective, the leader of the Swaraj Party went on to lay down the following broad principles :

“ I have made it clear, and I do it once again, that I am opposed on principle to political assassinations and violence in any shape or form. It is absolutely abhorrent to me and to my party. I consider it an obstacle to our political progress. It is also opposed to our religious teaching. . . .

“ As a question of practical politics I feel certain that if violence is to take root in the political life of our country, it will be the end of our dream of Swaraj for all time to come. I am, therefore, eager that this evil should not grow any further, and that this method should cease altogether as a political weapon in my country.”

Lord Birkenhead, the new Secretary of State for India, took this statement of Chitta Ranjan seriously and accepted this as a first step towards the beginning of a new era of co-operation. At this time, Chitta Ranjan had gone to Bankipore to recoup his health, and issued his second statement<sup>1</sup> in connection with the propaganda of violence and intimidation. In this statement he said :

“ Lord Birkenhead has invited me to go forward and to co-operate with the Government in repressing the violence which I deprecate. I entirely agree with him that never will freedom be reached by violence, and, if I may say so, I devoted a considerable portion of my speech at the Gaya Congress to demonstrating that freedom has never come through acts of violence, and, as I value freedom, I am not only willing but anxious to devote a few years of life that yet remain to me in carrying on an active propaganda against an evil which is a

<sup>1</sup> April 4th, 1925.

standing menace to the establishment of Swaraj. But I would be wanting in my duty as a conscientious citizen if I did not point out clearly and unequivocally that all my efforts in this direction are bound to be ineffective unless a favourable atmosphere is created by the Government.

“ Lord Birkenhead begins by saying that the repression which the Bengal Act contemplated is the repression of crime, and he concludes that nobody who is not a criminal is entitled to express a grievance against that legislation. When I speak of repression, I mean it in the sense in which that term is used by constitutional lawyers—the exercise by persons in authority of wide arbitrary or discretionary powers of constraint. English writers of constitutional law have expressed the view that, whenever there is discretion, there is room for arbitrariness ; and discretionary authority on the part of the Government must mean insecurity for legal freedom on the part of its subjects. . . . My grievance against the Bengal legislation is that it has empowered the persons in authority to usurp the functions of the court of law and to exercise wide arbitrary and discretionary powers of constraint.

“ This, to my mind, is conclusive of the situation before us. I therefore venture in return to invite Lord Birkenhead to cause a searching enquiry to be made into the causes which have brought about the revolutionary movement in India and then to set about applying the proper remedy, so that there may be a radical and permanent cure of the disease. It is no use treating merely the outward symptoms. I appeal to the Government to treat the disease itself and to apply the proper remedy.

“ The Government should recognize that, however mistaken the revolutionaries may be, however wrong and futile their methods and however criminal and reprehensible their acts, the guiding principle of their lives is sacrifice for the attainment of political and economic freedom for their country. The moment they feel, that at any rate the

foundation of our freedom is laid by the Government, I venture to assert that the revolutionary movement will be a thing of the past. I suggest in all humility that there should be a distinct and authoritative declaration by the Government at the earliest opportunity."

In no country in the world has the monster, revolt, once raised, ever been laid to rest. That is not the nature of this monster, it is never born to die. Neither in Russia, nor in Ireland, Persia, Egypt, nor anywhere else, has it been possible for any power to crush it. Nothing that the Government of India can do now will ever kill or scotch it. Everybody realizes that all the best efforts of Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford to reconcile the Revolutionary Party to British rule have been vain. Neither the Government of India Act, nor King George's Proclamation of 1919, nor the appointment of Lord Sinha to the Governorship of an important Indian province, nor the frequent requisitioning of the services of one or two Indians to the Imperial Conferences, nor the Rt. Hon. Srinivas Shastri's royal progress through the Dominions of the British Commonwealth, nor the throwing open of some of the King's Commissions in the army to members of respectable Indian families, nor the lure of a new Territorial Force, nor the placing of the Secretary of State for India's salary under the British estimate, nor the appointment of two additional Indian members in the Viceroy's Cabinet, could placate the spirit of revolt which had become a grave cause of anxiety to rulers and ruled alike.

Chitta Ranjan had hoped that a searching enquiry into the condition of the people and bold remedies to palliate their distress would soothe this spirit. But as he himself once said, "this spirit is closely associated with the hunger of the human heart for freedom". Only he forgot that "freedom's battle once begun" is "bequeathed by bleeding sire to son". So long as this hunger lasts—and it is bound to last till the realization of our national destiny—all impatient idealists will follow revolutionary methods as the shortest cut to their objective.

While, therefore, Chitta Ranjan was evidently wrong in his palliatives, no one can question the accuracy and truth of his interpretation of the Indian mind regarding the genesis of a revolutionary mentality in this country. But for some obvious reasons, British rulers of India want either to sidetrack the issue or put the world on a wrong scent over this outstanding question. And with this view several ingenious theories have been started in tracing the genesis of Indian unrest. [At one time, when the revolutionary mentality was confined to Maharastra and had not crossed over to the Gangetic valley, this nascent aspiration for freedom was interpreted by a clever theorist<sup>1</sup> as an anxiety of the mind of a certain section of the Maharastra Hindus for the re-establishment of the sway and influence of the Chitpavan Brahmins all over India. This theory, however, did not survive a searching scrutiny, and Sir Valentine himself has lived to see how inaccurate was his reading of the Indian political upheaval. At a later date, a more ingenious theory was started by one who had something to do with the suppression of revolutionary crimes in Bengal.

In his recent works, *A Bird's Eye View of India* and *The Heart of Aryavarta*, Lord Ronaldshay, an ex-Governor of Bengal, finds a new and different theory of the origin of Indian unrest. Lord Ronaldshay explains it as the refusal of the Indian mind to accept the dominance of Western culture and thought in public and political affairs ; or to use his own words, " the revolt of the rising generation of Western-educated Hindus against what it regards as the subordination of the soul of India to the cultural and political outlook of the West ". Lord Ronaldshay has quoted chapter and verse in these books as evidence that we people of India want to go back to the traditions and habits of life of the ancient Vedas and Purans and that our national pride and race consciousness have prompted us to revolt against a hybrid culture that has resulted from the impact of the east and west.

In support of his interesting thesis, Lord Ronaldshay makes the following extracts in his *Heart of Aryavarta*

<sup>1</sup> Sir Valentine Chirol in *Indian Unrest*.

from the writings of a doughty champion of the Hindu revival.<sup>1</sup>

“ Among all the divisions of mankind, it is to India that is reserved the highest and the most splendid destiny, the most essential to the future of the human race. It is she who must send forth from herself the future religion of the entire world, the Eternal religion which is to harmonize all religion . . . and make mankind one soul.”

“ Was India to deform herself from a temple of God into one vast inglorious suburb of English civilization ? ” —so runs a very interesting Indian explanation of the new ideas.

“ India must save herself by ending the alien dominion which has not only impoverished her body, but was also strangling her soul. It was only in an independent India, with the reins of self-determination in her own hands, that the ideal could be re-enthroned in its integrity of high thinking and holy living.

“ The nation felt ”, to quote the same writer, “ a quickening in the beating of its heart, a stirring in its blood, the vibration of chords long silent in its race-consciousness.”

Chitta Ranjan also sang at one time in the same tune. In one of his earlier speeches we read :

“ Mimic Anglicism has become an obsession with us ; we find its black footprint in every walk and endeavour of our life.”

A Bengali of a quite different temperament, but a virile representative of his race, has echoed the same sentiment in a quite different manner in the following passage :

“ Western civilization, however valuable as a factor in the progress of mankind, should not supersede, much

<sup>1</sup> Aurobindo Ghose.

less be permitted to destroy, the vital element of our civilization."<sup>1</sup>

Lord Ronaldshay has also described how the new devotion to India<sup>2</sup> has meant a new antagonism to England. Lord Ronaldshay appears to me to be about half-right. He expresses a great truth but not the whole truth. The idea of the Hindu revival came to life at a time when British rule in India had already become gall and wormwood to the people. The revivalist idea was therefore a sequel and not the genesis of Indian unrest.

The Indian may still be inspired by the traditions of the past more than any other people on the face of the earth—even more than the Chinese—but it is insulting to the educated community of India to-day to be told that it finds nothing good in modern life or culture, or that it can assimilate nothing from the virtues and lessons of the West. There may be men like Mr. Gandhi in whose nostrils everything Western stinks—Western science, Western medicine, Western education, and even Western courts of justice. However much we may declaim against Western education and thought, the Indian mind of to-day is shaped more by the currents of Western thought than by the currents of thoughts which lie embedded in ancient tomes and in the outworn Shastras. Lord Ronaldshay's explanation diverts us from the ugly reality of our present-day conditions to an atmosphere which is more imaginary than real.

The education that the Indian mind has been receiving for the last two centuries has not been absolutely in vain. It has given a new orientation to our view of life, and has impelled us to find a new earth and heaven in 'a new condition of things. The old philosophy of life, the old dependence and resignation to *kismet* and *karma*, to the inevitable and the indispensable, have all but been blotted out of our intellectual outlook, and we have begun to look on our conditions of existence from a different standpoint, and in terms of modern life. We have now learnt that most

<sup>1</sup> Sir Ashutosh Mukerjee in the Report of the University Commission.



of the sufferings of our life—political, material and economic—are due to the faults of omission and commission of our rulers, that most of the conditions in which we now live are removable, and it is only a foreign bureaucracy that stands between us and our rightful place in the sun.

The poet who hazarded the statement in the Victorian era that "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet", wrote himself down as an inaccurate observer, for, within less than a century, the East has changed its character and risen to the position of an undeveloped Europe. As in China and Japan, so also in India, the recluse has been forced out of his cloister, and though looking around to the world abroad and to the culture and civilization of the West in a spirit of bewildered amazement, he has come out into the open air and has decided not to go back to the cloister again. Young India has drunk so deep of the new and heady wine of modern materialism that the metaphysics of quiescence and the philosophy of fatalism can no longer drug or dope her into a life of somnolence or slumber, and "he of the mystic East" is no longer "touched with night". The East is no longer she who "bowed low before the blast in patient deep disdain", whilst "she let the legions thunder past, then plunged in thought again". The prophets of reaction and revivalism are considered back numbers to-day among all classes of our people, and their wild denunciations of modernity carry conviction nowhere.

It is neither a return to the "golden age" of India, nor a life of self-contained isolation, that the Indian mind now yearns for. Nor is it in the academy of Daultpur or the Visva Bharati of Bolepur, or the Gurukul of Hardwar, that young Bengalis gather in their thousands to-day. Vedantism and Eastern culture may be good, but freedom, political and economic, is better. Not what the past can offer to us, but what the future holds for us is what troubles the average Indian to-day. Young India does not want to tear itself away from the hopes and ambitions of the other modern nations of the world, only to seek consolation and happiness in sublime metaphysics which had become slowly petrified

in immutable formalism and in the dignified lifelessness of Vedantic and Tantric rites.

It is on freedom first and freedom last—freedom from foreign rule and yoke—that the young revolutionaries have set their heart and eyes and not on freedom from distractions of a modern life, or freedom from commercialism or industrialism either. No Royal Commission or declaration of British purpose in India, no palliatives or remedies of any distemper of the body politic, no removal of grievances, can check the hopes of these impatient idealists who can find no way to win their freedom but by making short work of the existing system of government in this country.

Poor revolutionaries! What a pity they do not see that so long as we do not put our own house in order and look facts in the face, realize our own responsibilities for the development of a greater and a more united civic and national consciousness, and practice to a larger extent the virtues of forbearance and self-restraint, short cuts will be of no use and their heart's desire for freedom will recede further and further, as does a mirage in the desert.

## CHAPTER XVI

### DESHBANDHU'S LAST DAYS

LIFE would lose all its dynamic force and incentive if its mysteries could be revealed by human calculations and prophecies. Creation would have been robbed of all its interest and curiosity, if man were gifted with prescience to know his future. Yet, in the unending mysteries of life and creation, coming events at times cast their shadows before. And these shadows are realized by man's sixth sense in the midst of his biggest triumphs or his deepest tragedies.

Chitta Ranjan had, by the end of 1924, realized that he had reached the zenith of his glory, and that the shadow of death was falling on him. He was himself getting tired of life, particularly of the strife and struggle with which his later years were crowded. His soul was well knit now and all its battles won. Though a broken machine, he still hoped that the end would take long in coming.

After attending the Belgaum Congress, he returned to Calcutta on January 3rd, 1925, seriously ill. The physicians who attended him on this occasion suspected his case to be one of food poisoning. He was so ill that no visitors were allowed to see him, nor was he permitted to leave his bed. When still not considered to be quite convalescent, he allowed himself to be carried a distance of nearly three miles from his house at Bhowanipur to the Town Hall of Calcutta, where the meetings of the Bengal Legislative Council are held. He went there not merely to record his vote, but for the set purpose of inflicting another defeat on the Government—the most signal defeat ever suffered by the alien bureaucracy in this country. The result of the vote on the Ministers' salaries in March infused a new hope and vigour into his life and was the crowning triumph of his short-lived career as a member of the Bengal Legislative Council.

A few days after this event, he had drawn up and executed a trust deed, giving away to the nation all his real property for the medical training of Indian girls and for a hospital for Indian women. This gift, which included the residence at Russa Road in which he had lived for nearly twenty-five years, recalls to mind the notable endowments of two other patriotic Bengalis of an earlier day. Rashbehari Ghose, a most distinguished lawyer and jurist of his time in India, gave to the University of Calcutta a donation of over Rs. 20 lakhs for the promotion of higher scientific education in Bengal, and his own residence at Alipur to the Bengal Technical Institute. Tarak Nath Palit, another eminent lawyer, similarly gave away his palatial residence at Ballygunge and a large sum of money to the University of Calcutta for the same object. It is, however, a great pity that, though Chitta Ranjan earned no smaller fortune than either of them, he had hardly a tenth of the money to leave to his people when he drew up this trust. At that time, he had only thirty-five thousand rupees to his credit in his bank. He had spent all this money as he had earned it, and at the end of his life he found himself almost on the brink of poverty.

In March and April, 1925, he issued two manifestoes, repudiating the revolutionary activities in Bengal. This open condemnation of revolutionary mentality and activities won for him at once the unstinted admiration of Lord Birkenhead, Secretary of State for India, who took the earliest opportunity to bring these views of Chitta Ranjan to the notice of the English public. From his place in the House of Lords, Lord Birkenhead wanted Chitta Ranjan to move a step further in order to enable him to extend to him the hand of co-operation.

A few weeks before the Faridpore Conference, a common friend had opened a triangular negotiation between Chitta Ranjan Das, Lord Lytton, and the Government of India, in the hope of finding some way out of the tangle and deadlock which had come about in Bengal through the vote of the local Council over Ministers' salaries. Early in April, Chitta

Ranjan had no doubt gone beyond the preliminary stages of settling the terms which the common friend had been discussing between the three parties. It is well-known that in the course of these negotiations Chitta Ranjan met Lord Lytton, the then Governor of Bengal, in the Ram Krishna Mission at Belur<sup>1</sup> at the invitation of an English lady, who was staying at the Mission house at the time. In the absence of any direct evidence or written words from any party, it is difficult to lay hands on the exact terms proposed and discussed in these pourparlers. For some reason or other the negotiations proved abortive, but Chitta Ranjan still remained expectant.

In his Inaugural Address at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridpore on May 2nd, Chitta Ranjan defined his new position as one of willingness, under certain conditions, to accept the gesture from Whitehall. In this address, he struck altogether a new note and invited the Government to meet him half-way on terms of honourable co-operation, a gesture which surprised both his friends and his enemies. But beyond declaring his change of heart, he did not commit himself to any details, for he believed that after his pronouncement the onus lay not on him, but on the Government. At Faridpore a section of the delegates of the Conference gave him a very unquiet time and his new attitude towards the Government on the one side and the revolutionaries on the other had brought him to the point of breaking with his party.

He came back to Calcutta from Faridpore suffering from fever, and his health again became so impaired that his doctors wanted him to proceed to Europe at once and settle down for a few months at some health resort. But Chitta Ranjan shrank from a visit to Europe, lest it might be misinterpreted as a political mission for the purpose of entering into pourparlers with the Secretary of State. Then he thought of going either to Shillong or to Octacamund,

<sup>1</sup> Belur is a small town about four miles from Calcutta on the other side of the Ganges and contains the grave (samadhi) of the late Swami Vivekananda.

but at last he made up his mind to go to Darjeeling, against the advice of his physicians.

After a flying visit to Pabna<sup>1</sup> where he had gone to meet his latest spiritual guide, Chitta Ranjan arrived at Darjeeling with his wife on May 16th, and took up his residence at a house known as "Step Aside", just below the Mall. From the day he arrived there, he began to take very long walks up and down the hills. Though he was gradually picking up, the weekly fevers appeared with a persistent periodicity. He would not heed these attacks, but went about on foot for several miles every morning and evening. There appeared to be two things on which he had set his heart at this time. He was under the impression that a few days' stay at Darjeeling had done him immense good, and this encouraged him in the idea of buying a small house there and passing the remaining days of his life away from the turmoil and worries of a busy political life. He told me that, out of the small amount of money he had still left to his credit in the bank, he intended to spend two-thirds in buying a house and to keep the balance to enable him to carry on for the rest of his days. A house was selected for him by a friend, and preliminaries were gone into. This house, known as "Kathleen Cot", is situated at the top of the Jalpaiguri Spur, just below the Auckland Road, nearly three miles away from the heart of the town, and commands a most picturesque view of the eternal snows. He had recently formed the habit of visiting this house now and again.

In April, Lord Reading had gone to England at the invitation of Lord Birkenhead to discuss with him the Indian situation and to concert measures for putting the Indian constitution on a working basis till the appointment of the Statutory Commission in 1929.<sup>2</sup>

Chitta Ranjan believed, on what appeared to be very inaccurate information, that the Viceroy had gone to London

<sup>1</sup> A sort of a "math" (place of worship) had been started in the suburbs of the town of Pabna by Anukul Chandra Bhattacharya and his mother, to offer spiritual ministrations to such people who seek light at their hands.

<sup>2</sup> As provided for in Sec. 84A of the Government of India Act of 1919.

to get the Minority Report of the Muddiman Committee accepted by the Secretary of State, and hoped that he would be wanted by Lord Birkenhead to talk over with him the new situation in India. He was, therefore, expecting a message from England to that effect, and he was confident that no finality could, or would, be reached without some consultation with him. This message, however, did not arrive, and he was very disappointed. Hope deferred made his heart sick, and, in his broken health, it perhaps proved too much a strain for his shattered nerves.

At this time also, he was anxious to get all political parties to act and think together, and to make this objective feasible, he was even prepared to retire from politics himself. Early in June, while he was in this frame of mind, Mr. Gandhi paid him a visit at "Step Aside" and for the better part of a week, they conferred with each other on the future of the Swaraji Party, the Congress, and the Charter and non-co-operation movement. Mrs. Besant paid him a flying visit, to consult him about her Commonwealth of India Bill. After two days of discussion Chitta Ranjan refused to give his assent to her Bill, as he did not intend to anticipate the decision of the Congress in the matter. Personally, he had no quarrel with anybody regarding the lines of a future constitution of India. For forms of Government he would not enter the lists with anybody; nor was he very anxious to get complete provincial autonomy all at once; all that he desired was a declaration by Parliament of a definite date for the realization of our Swaraj and an automatic advance stage by stage to that goal.

About two weeks before his death Chitta Ranjan called on me one morning at my lonely retreat far away from the town and in the course of a conversation frankly confided to me his anticipations of the Birkenhead-Reading conversations. If I remember correctly, he gave me the impression that, given the gesture he was looking for, he would even be prepared to accept the task of forming a Ministry and administer the transferred departments from a constructive point of view. On terms of "honourable co-operation"

he was even prepared to work the Montagu Act, provided only that the Ministers in charge of the transferred Departments were made masters in their own houses, with independent powers of purse and without the risk of interference from the head of the administration. He would be content with this though, at the back of his mind, he would have liked such Reserved Departments as Police and Justice to be handed over to Ministers. Unfortunately these questions haunted him like a nightmare, and would give him no rest or peace. He was always brooding over them till his broken constitution could bear the strain no longer.

Writing to a friend from Darjeeling three days before his death, Chitta Ranjan stated with reference to the Reading-Birkenhead conversations in London and the triangular negotiations carried on by an "intermediary": "Something may come in July or August, or even later. I believe something may come out of the Birkenhead-Reading conversations. . . . Something tells me that they will make some kind of a proposal to us. Whether it will be of any real value to us is another matter. But I do not wish to complicate the issue by any Commonwealth Bill or any such thing in the meantime. If nothing acceptable comes the next Congress must give a clear political lead."

He, however, did not live to see the lead which the Congress at Cawnpore, under the presidency of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, gave to the country over this matter. .

In the meantime, a mellowed softness came upon his life and temperament. He had now become one of the sweetest tempered men I had ever seen in my life, and the spirit of bitterness and hatred of his enemies, which was such an outstanding characteristic of his earlier manhood, had altogether disappeared. He was now all suavity and sweet reasonableness. I often asked him, at this time, his opinion regarding Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea, Lord Lytton, and other men placed in high office against whom he had fought so keenly during past years. He had not a word to say against them now, either in sorrow or in anger.

Nearly six weeks before he died, he invited the present



writer to review for his organ, *Forward*, Surendra Nath's book, *A Nation in Making*—a publication over which writers in the Anglo-Indian Press had gone without sufficient cause into ecstasies. Two days after this invitation had been sent out to me, a telegram came to me from Patna over his name asking me not to be "too hard on Surendra Nath". On another occasion, he had prompted me to publish in the *Bengalee* (a paper which I was then editing) something about a political enemy of his having accepted a cheque for five thousand rupees from a government official with a view to carrying on a campaign against the Swaraj Party.' When a disclaimer came to me personally from this party, he would not allow me to tender an apology to him, for Das repeatedly assured me that he would be able to satisfy me about the truth of the story. Only a few weeks before he died, when I referred to this matter, he told me how sorry he was for having maligned this enemy on the authority of thoroughly unreliable persons. At this stage, he would often speak to me in the kindest of terms of men with whom he had fought hard and whom he had sometimes hit below the belt. Even his earlier dislike for Rabindra Nath Tagore gave way, at this time, to a spirit of intense admiration for the life and work of the great Poet Laureate of Asia ; for he had asked me to see the author of the *Gitanjali*, on my return to Calcutta, and press him to organize an Asiatic Confederation in India, as he believed that no other Indian than Tagore could successfully take the initiative in such an important matter.

On the evening of June 13th, I and two of my daughters (the Misses Lina and Bina Ray) were sitting in one of the shelters facing Lebong. Chitta Ranjan approached on foot with a rickshaw behind him. He quietly came near to us and addressed one of my daughters and congratulated her on my restored health. I returned the compliment to him, as he was looking quite fresh and fit. All on a sudden he looked apprehensive and prophetic, and told me that the time for hallelujah had not yet come. He could not say how his health was until the following Tuesday had come and gone. That was the last time we met, for on Tuesday afternoon.

June 16th, before I could see him again, the great Bengali warrior had gone to his eternal rest. I did not know, and most of his friends at Darjeeling were not aware, that on Sunday the periodic fever had come on, this time with fatal consequences. On Monday morning, his temperature had risen greatly, and throughout the whole day he was restless and in acute pain. Early on the morning of Tuesday, June 16th, the fever subsided, and, with this decline of temperature, his pulse began to sink. A little after 1 P.M. his heart was sinking fast and he became unconscious. At 5.15 P.M. he quietly passed away.

As soon as the news spread in the little town of Darjeeling, streams of visitors began to pour into "Step Aside" to take a last look at the earthly remains of this great Bengali leader. Within half an hour of his death, I and my youngest daughter (Bina) visited the chamber where he lay, as if in natural, peaceful slumber, his face transfigured by the hand of death into an image of what was best in him. From half-past five to midnight, the house was packed with visitors drawn from all classes and communities of the people of that remote hill-side station, a large number of them shedding tears and sobbing as if one of their dearest friends had been torn from them. As seven o'clock on Wednesday morning, under the purest cobalt of a Himalayan sky, his body was carried on a bier from his house to the railway station, covered with flowers brought by friends and strangers alike. When the cortège arrived at the middle of Mackenzie Road, a large crowd of the hill folk joined the procession, and at the railway station several thousand people had gathered to pay their last tribute and farewell to the departed hero. A few minutes before 9 A.M. the bier was placed in a parcel van, as there was no room for it in an ordinary passenger bogey. From Darjeeling to Calcutta, at every important station, enormous crowds had gathered to take their last glimpse of the mortal remains of the greatest and most dynamic leader which young Bengal has ever known or seen. At Sealdah, where the train arrived three hours late, a sea of human heads was waiting to receive the funeral cortège. When the bier was brought out from the

train a marvellous scene was witnessed in which a procession over two miles long was formed to pay Calcutta's last homage to its Mayor. Nearly three lakhs of men and women with Mr. Gandhi at their head, came out into the streets and followed the bier from Sealdah to the burning ghat. The procession took nearly six hours to arrive at its final destination, and at 4 P.M., amidst a shower of rain and with the prayers of a whole nation, the funeral obsequies were performed.<sup>1</sup>

The scene not only astounded all European residents in Calcutta, but also proved to be a demonstration of affection and loyalty for a leader unparalleled in the East.

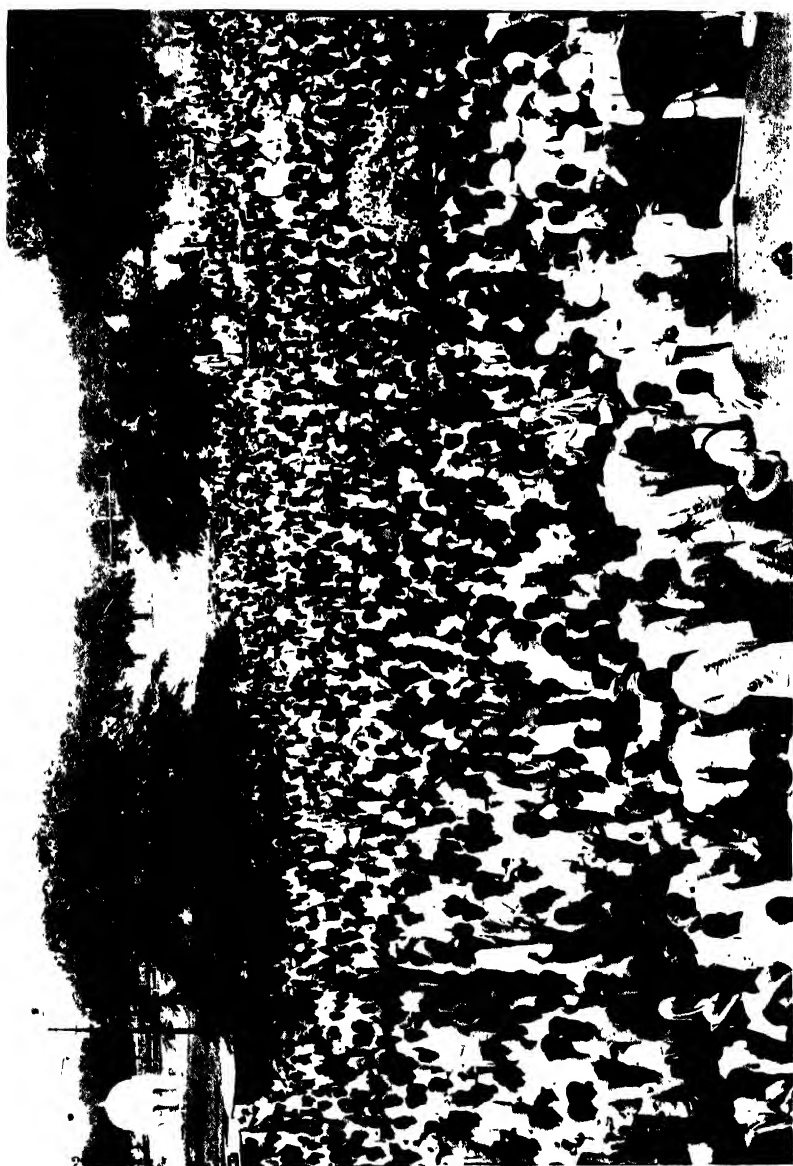
All places of business, mercantile offices and firms, schools and colleges, theatres and cinemas under Indian management were closed for the day, and the premier city in the Empire went into deep mourning and remained inarticulate with grief.

Mr. Garvin has beautifully described the funeral of this great leader in the following eloquent and expressive words :

" Unless you have had even a momentary glimpse of Asia, no imagination will enable you to conceive it. The first days in Bombay or Calcutta create a fresh sense of the multitudinous complexity of the human swarm, and between the cities the primitive spaces of the land are as unexpected. No amount of reading or hearsay beforehand had enabled you to visualize these scenes, and you know in your turn that you never can suggest them by description. To pick out vivid details gives no sense of the whole, any more than a visit to an aquarium by itself can convey a true idea of mid-ocean.

" Amongst us only a few in a million can realize that the funeral of a popular leader in Calcutta last Thursday was the greatest and strangest scene witnessed anywhere in the British Empire for many a day. Covered with flowers, the body of Mr. Das was borne in procession through vast crowds

<sup>1</sup> On the second anniversary of his death, June 16th, 1927, the foundation stone was laid for a cenotaph at Keoratola on the spot where he was cremated.





to the burning ghat with the drumming and clanging and wailing of music and cries that are not as ours. Mahatma Gandhi, clad only in his loin-cloth, was carried shoulder-high to the place of fire and ashes. Grief for the dead leader mingled with enthusiasm for the living saint to spread a delirium of emotion. No hero-worship in the West compares with the vehement though often fugitive idolatry devoted in India to any conspicuous man who can magnetize the religious or racial sentiment of the people. We must look on a mourning like this with sympathy and respect apart from any reasoned difference of ideas about the future of Indian Government."

Nor was this the last nor the most picturesque of all the funeral demonstrations. The Hindu believes in the transmigration of souls and in a cycle of births and re-births. To prevent an undesirable birth after death, the sons of the deceased generally perform a ceremony which is called *Sradh* or a memorial service. This takes place after a definite period after the decease of every Hindu, and consists of a worship of the departed spirit along with the worship of some of the principal gods of the Hindu pantheon, done with a view to induce the gods to be kind and merciful to the departed soul during the crossing of the bar and its voyage from one world to another and also for a happy and peaceful life on its re-birth. Not exactly a service like the requiem which is in vogue among Christians; the *Sradh* is something more—much more vocal, demonstrative and spectacular. The *Sradh* not only is a ceremony performed for the peace of the departed soul, but contains long prayers with offerings of various kinds to the gods for providing for the comfort and happiness and peace of the dead person in the next world. Usually it is performed with great ceremony, large numbers of friends are feasted, and alms are given to the poor. Learned Brahmins are invited to take part in the ceremony for the recital of scriptural incantations and discourses on abstruse metaphysical problems. On the occasion of Chitta Ranjan Das's *Sradh* on July 1st, 1925, Calcutta wore the appearance of a holiday, and thousands of people gathered in and outside

his residence to pay their last tribute to his memory. His son performed the ceremony before a full-sized portrait of Chitta Ranjan and in the presence of a very large number of Brahmin savants gathered from all parts of Northern India and all the prominent men of the city of Calcutta irrespective of caste, colour and creed. Silver, copper and bell-metal plates and household necessities were presented to a very large number of the invited Brahmins, and to some selected brahminy bulls and cows. In the afternoon nearly fifty thousand poor men were treated to a sumptuous feast, thus bringing to a close the funeral ceremonies of the greatest Hindu born in Bengal in his age.

## CHAPTER XVII

### CHITTA RANJAN'S ACHIEVEMENTS, FAILURES AND UNREALIZED DREAMS

CHITTA RANJAN was a visionary, a dreamer, and an apostle of revolt. Yet, in practical politics, he suffered many things and refused to move onwards in many matters. He had little sympathy with existing conventions of life or social or political institutions of any kind. In his private and domestic life, he was as strong a destroyer of social usages and conventions as he had constituted himself in the last years of his life an enemy of the Government established by law. Though born of Brahmo parents, he treated lightly certain cherished ideals and conventions that the Brahmo Samaj held dear and sacred. As we have noticed in a previous chapter, he wrote and published several poems in which he defied the orthodox cult of Brahmo theism and puritanism. In his habits of life he had marked out for himself new principles and laws of conduct. In a later period of his life, he returned to Hindu orthodoxy, but had cast to the winds its principal corner-stone—the caste system. Against the fundamental Hindu usage of marrying within one's own caste, he had married both his daughters to bridegrooms chosen from castes other than his own ; and he got neither of these marriages registered, taking upon himself the risk of their validity being challenged in a Court of Law. Yet, in the *Sradh* ceremony of his parents and in his daughters' marriages, he had followed Hindu ritual to the letter. In fact, when he grew to mature age, he neither remained a Brahmo nor became a Hindu, according to the current and accepted interpretation of the term.

He lived like a prince during the better part of his life, indulging in epicurean habits to the full ; but when he turned his back upon this chapter of his life, he renounced them as



probably no one in modern India has done. Even before he had turned over this new leaf, in his laborious days he had given away in charities, mostly indiscriminate, what he had earned by the sweat of his brow. Though living in the midst of a materialistic age he never acquired a love for money except as a mere instrument for the demonstration of his altruistic instincts.

Through all the various stages of his life, revolt marked him as his own ; and he went on breaking with the zeal of an iconoclast all images and fetishes that came in his way, no matter whether religious, social or political. He represented in all his life and ideas the spirit of revolt, and of Prometheus unbound ; and, when he became the evangelist of Indian traditionalism, he did so, not with a view to paying homage and worship to the ideas of a bygone and remote past, but with a view to breaking away from the bondage of the present, and demolishing the gods, fashions, and conventions of modern life. We have no doubt in our mind that he renounced his splendid practice at the Bar, not from the spirit of mere sacrifice, as he never loved money for money's sake, nor to make himself an example to others, but to turn his back on the beaten track of the law, which he had never regarded as a noble or inspiring profession.

In politics, he was not in love with any form of bureaucracy ; nor had he much love for Western Parliamentary institutions either. He was a democrat, but he did not subscribe to the main shibboleths of modern democracies, and his whole temperament, by nature and training, was that of a great autocrat who could bear no criticism nor forgive anyone who challenged his authority and position. He was a Vaishnav by spiritual affinity and culture, but he did not believe in the cult of static calm or spiritual resignation which is the very essence of Vaishnavism. He was a socialist, particularly in his academic sympathy with Marxian doctrines ; but he did not move even his little finger to destroy the permanent settlement of Bengal, a pernicious institution which has for nearly a century and a half stood effectively between Bengal and progress. Nor in his

coquettings with Trade Unions, could he rise above capitalistic influences and go in for a wholesale scheme of better conditions of life for all labouring classes, or for any scheme to put down sweated labour and sweated wages.

Chitta Ranjan had given his attention to journalism at various stages of his life, but not until his retirement from the Bar did he become a full-fledged editor of a newspaper. Just a few days before the general election of 1923, he had started *Forward* as the daily organ of his party. As the editor of this journal he was eminently successful in organizing the public opinion of Bengal in support of his own doctrines and ideals. As a propagandist journal, *Forward* more than fulfilled the expectations and hopes of its founder, yet it cannot be said that it ever attained the high standard and reputation which such journals as the *Dandhya*, the *Yugantar*, the *Atmasakti* and the *Bande Mataram* had succeeded in establishing for themselves nearly twenty years before as the messengers of the fiery cross to young Bengal. But perhaps the times were different and he was not the absolute master in his own house.

Though he was gifted in a very high measure with the powers of persuasion, he failed to reach the first rank of public speakers of Young India. Keshab Chandra Sen, Lal Mohan Ghose, Kali Churn Banurji, Ananda Mohan Bose and Surendra Nath Banerjea might well be reckoned as heroes of a hundred platforms, and could any day hold their own against English or American orators of the front rank of this and the last century. Chitta Ranjan certainly spoke very well and with an earnestness and candour that almost bewitched his audience, but his oratory lacked the classical dignity and the rounded periods with which the eloquence of Burke and Chatham are associated on the one side, as well as the terse condensation, directness, and the simple phraseology of a Lord Rosebery or a Joseph Chamberlain on the other.

Intellectually he exhibited in all his later public activities an extraordinary subtlety and nimbleness, but he failed to

apply his splendid gifts to any work of enduring good or benefit to his country. He had practically abandoned his devotion to literature as soon as he became a busy lawyer, and had ceased to contribute articles to the newspapers and reviews as he had done as a free lance in the days of the *Bande Mataram*. Towards renaissance and spirituality in India he contributed very little to which subsequent generations of Indians may look for inspiration. In this matter probably, Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghose's contributions will be worked in the future for valuable ore. Chitta Ranjan's whole time, from the date on which he suspended his practice in the Bar to the last day of his life, was absorbed in the task of laying truly and faithfully the foundation of his party and keeping his flock together. He had little leisure to think of leaving behind him anything in the nature of a permanent landmark in art, politics, philosophy, or literature.

He was so impatient a reformer and so obsessed with an enthusiasm for destruction that he did not even shrink in 1921 from wrecking several hundreds of schools in Bengal, on the plea that they were training and preparing our young men for a life of clerical serfdom. But when he tried to establish an independent University at Dacca, and several schools all over Bengal for the propagation of what is known as "national education", his efforts met with conspicuous failure, and by 1922-23 the older schools which he had destroyed were again full and busy. A few days before his death he told a friend that "national education was unrealizable without a national system of Government, and the boycott of the University was about the weakest point in the new national propaganda". How thousands of young men, whose careers were wrecked by his inconsiderate zeal, wish to-day that he had awakened to this reality before he had set out on his work of destruction!

Even in his short career as a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, he stood out more as an apostle of *destruction than as a respecter of persons and institutions*. No doubt, he scotched dyarchy, but he was unable to put

anything in its place. Not that he did not want to but he could not. And as a result he remained a destroyer, and could not become a builder, try as he might.

In his last speech to the Bengal Legislative Council he said :

“ My answer to those who ask why I want to destroy is this : I want to destroy because this rotten structure is occupying the place where a beautiful mansion may be erected. May I ask how you can put up a beautiful building without pulling down the rotten structure which had already occupied the place ? You cannot. Therefore there is no sense in that criticism, destruction ! destruction ! We do not want to destroy merely. It is a gross libel on the Swarajist members to say that we want only to destroy. We want to destroy in order that we may be able to build up. If we want to obstruct, it is because we may get the opportunity of constructing. It is to my mind a principle as simple as it can be. Why is it so difficult for my friends to realize it ? I cannot make out. Why ! Look at the history of any country ; look at the history of England ! This sort of thing has gone on there and no power has come to the people without this obstruction. It is a wicked and pernicious system. One thing was good for England because it brought freedom for the English people, but that very thing is bad in this country because it is the wicked Swarajists who apply it.”

He completed his work of destruction, but did not live to see any work of construction seriously undertaken, nor could he lay the foundation of the “ beautiful mansion ” he had in mind. He made a bold attempt to raise a large sum of money for village reconstruction—to spread sanitation, supply pure drinking water, distribute free medicine and establish primary schools in rural areas. Unfortunately he failed to realize sufficient funds for the purpose, and, before his schemes could be put through, the hand of death had fallen on him. It must, however, be noticed here, that, as *the head of the civic administration in Calcutta for nearly 1 year, he was able to induce the Corporation to establish*

primary schools, a good hospital and medical school at the eastern end of the city, and several health associations and depots in different quarters for the treatment of cholera, small-pox, malaria and kala-azar.

\* Nor as a visionary did Chitta Ranjan confine his mental outlook to a mere reconstruction of Indian life. He cast his eyes on the world abroad and conceived the idea of a Federation of Asia. In his inaugural address at Gaya, as the President of the Congress, he said :

“ Even more important is the participation of India in the great Asiatic Federation, which I see in the course of formation. I have hardly any doubt that the Pan-Islamic movement, which was started on a somewhat narrow basis, has given way or is about to give way to the great Federation of all Asiatic peoples. It is the union of the oppressed nationalities of Asia. Is India to remain outside this union ? I admit that our freedom must be won by ourselves but such a bond of friendship and love, of sympathy and co-operation, between India and the rest of Asia, nay, between India and all the liberty-loving people of the world, is destined to bring about world-peace. World-peace to my mind means the freedom of every nationality, and I go further and say that no nation on the face of the earth can be really free when other nations are in bondage.”

All his life, before he was recognized as the stormy petrel of Indian unrest, he had cherished beautiful illusions, been obsessed with wonderful visions, and dreamt inspiring dreams. The solidarity of the Indian nation, based on a permanent Hindu-Moslem understanding, of which he had given an earnest of his enthusiasm in the famous Pact of December, 1923, and the Federation of Asia remained to his last day unrealized dreams.

While not believing in any particular faith in his latter days, he rose above the sordid spirit of religiosity and communalism. He became a transcendentalist, and, like Abu'l Fazl, he entered into the spirit of universal religious tolerance. Three centuries ago, in an inscription on a temple in Kashmir, Abu'l Fazl wrote thus :

"Thy elect have no dealings with either heresy or orthodoxy; for neither of them stands behind the screen of thy truth.

"Heresy to the heretic and religion to the orthodox; but the dust of the rose petal belongs to the heart of the perfume seller."

Inspired by a sentiment of this nature, Chitta Ranjan made some very serious attempts in his life, including the Pact of December, 1923, to prove to both these communities that a change of heart was necessary for them to make a united India possible. Unfortunately for India, his dream never materialized, and, before twelve months had passed after his death, his famous Bengal Pact was abandoned both by the Hindus and by the Mahomedans as a mere scrap of paper.

As regards the Federation of India he could cherish it as a mere intellectual vision, the ultimate realization of which could not, and did not, enter into practical politics during his lifetime. In his last public utterance at Faridpore, he gave expression to his ideas on an Indian Federation in the following manner:—

"For myself, I have a clear vision as to what I seek. I seek a federation of the states of India: each free to follow, as it must follow, the culture and the tradition of its own people: each bound to each in the common service of all: a great federation within a greater federation, the federation of free nations, whose freedom is the measure of their service to man, and whose unity the hope of peace among the peoples of the earth."

But neither in his address at Faridpore nor in any other public utterance do we find Chitta Ranjan thrashing out this question at any length. Nowhere in his public speeches do we come across any programme for the construction of an eastern structure for the Indian Commonwealth in consonance with the aspirations of the people in British India on the

one side, and the security of the Indian principalities on the other. Nor do we find him anywhere offering any helpful criticism on the two schemes which had been placed before the country on this subject during his lifetime. Mr. Lionel Curtis's idea of building up a Federal Commonwealth in this country on the model of the United States, by dividing India into a large number of small, homogeneous, and autonomous provinces, at one time came perilously near to practical politics. At a later stage, Major Lugard's scheme of parcelling out India into a large number of independent and sovereign states under well-chosen Indian governors, or in other words, the extension of the system of tributary principalities throughout the country, engaged public attention seriously both in this country and England.<sup>1</sup>

The Federation of Man as a social Utopia never captured Chitta Ranjan's imagination, and, at one time he even stood out as a parochial advocate of patriotism, as against the more sublime dogma of an international brotherhood. On this point he once crossed swords with Rabindra Nath Tagore, who had soared to the higher plane of looking at man as a limb and part of the Universal Soul. Chitta Ranjan absolutely lacked the idea of cosmic consciousness and the sense of cosmic solidarity with which the vision of the human race had been widened by the *rishis* of old in ancient India and by seers like Emerson, Walt Whitman, Wordsworth and Tennyson in the West.

Chitta Ranjan's failures and lapses were many, but some of his achievements were striking and he will long live in memory as the man who first gave check to a powerful government like the British, and as a wonderful magician who in the space of a few years changed and broadened the entire political and intellectual outlook of the Bengali people. He not only scotched dyarchy, in spite of the best efforts of the Government to retain and work it out, but he also succeeded in tearing to tatters all the prestige and authority

<sup>1</sup> Yet another scheme of Federalism has been promulgated by Sir Frederick Whyte, the first President of the Indian Legislative Assembly, since C. R. Das's death.

that the Anglo-Indian government had acquired in the two centuries since Robert Clive laid the foundation of England's Empire in the East. He lived to turn the old acquiescence and the placid contentment of the people into a feeling of bitter dislike and hatred of the powers that be. In this endeavour he was not only a destroyer but also a builder, as he lived to organize the most powerful school of political opinion in the country, and made it such a great power in the land that all ambitious men, no matter what their social rank, looked to him and his party for influence and patronage, rather than to Government House, to which so many generations of Indians had turned for all sorts of personal and social recognition.

Taking everything together, Chitta Ranjan's memory will be cherished by his grateful countrymen as that of a builder rather than a destroyer. When he entered Indian politics, he found political ideals and parties in a most nebulous and chaotic condition. The masses generally, and a large portion of the classes, were still sleeping in the long night of mediæval mysticism and inaction. Chitta Ranjan whipped up his people from this deep somnolence, brought them face to face with the gravity of their condition, and awakened them to a consciousness of nationhood. He worked day and night for a few years, spent laborious days and sleepless nights, and left behind him a party which, for the first time in the history of India, knows its mind and can gather courage enough to follow its convictions. This will remain the principal landmark of his political work—a whole people brought under a common standard, inspired by ideals of self-help and determination, and set to work out their own destiny without any extraneous aid or help.

At the same time, as a constructive politician or statesman he fell far behind Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Dadabhoy Naoroji or Pheroze Shah Mehta, while in astuteness he was no equal to Bal Gangadhar Tilak. But in his immense sacrifice for political idealism, in risking health and life for the organization of a new political party, and in integrity, doggedness and



tenacity of purpose, Chitta Ranjan had no equal in India, and even Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea, with all his brilliant talents and patriotic devotion, is not to be compared with him. And for moving masses and leading them on from stage to stage, from victory to victory, 'as a great general, the wizard of Bengal left far behind the prophet and high priest of Young India.

In one very pleasing aspect of his life, Chitta Ranjan bore a striking resemblance to another distinguished Bengali of his day. Like Bhupendra Nath Basu he had great social qualities and had the wonderful power of making friends with all sorts and conditions of people, and turning a large number of politically minded men into loyal and faithful friends. Like Bhupendra Nath Basu again, he was able to keep and hold them together as no other contemporary Bengali had done by his wonderful tact, sweetness of temper and reliance on the loyalty and integrity of his lieutenants. But unlike Bhupendra Nath Basu and very much like Surendra Nath Banerjea, he failed to gather round him many intellectual men and sometimes even repelled them; and also unlike Bhupendra Nath and very much like Surendra Nath Banerjea, he had not the shrewdness to know sincere workers and friends from parasites and flatterers. So long as he was in the saddle things were all right. But as soon as he passed away the flatterers and parasites got the better of the party machine and organization and the real and sincere workers were elbowed and crowded out of public life.

With Surendra Nath Banerjea and Gopal Krishna Gokhale Chitta Ranjan had three things in common. All of them took politics very seriously, almost raising it to the level of a religion, all of them were extremely sensitive to criticism, so much so that not one of them would speak to a man who would not recognize his authority and bow to his decision; and, above all, all these three men were supremely innocent of a sense of humour.

It is now necessary to compare this great Bengali with the leaders of the other national movements of our own times in other parts of the world.

There can be no doubt that in powers of organization and in giving obstruction a scientific orientation, in the abundant and diplomatic use of barbed shafts, and for adroitness, he resembled in a great measure Charles Stewart Parnell. With Michael Collins he had little in common, excepting that they were both good generals and clever masters of strategy ; yet in generalship and powers of organization he could not come near to either Kemal or Zaghlul Pasha. Kemal and Zaghlul have made Turkey and Egypt what they are to-day ; Chitta Ranjan spent himself in the barest spade-work. But it must be said for Chitta Ranjan that he had not the opportunities of life of either a Kemal or a Zaghlul. Zaghlul and Kemal both had a united, homogeneous and independent nation behind them. Chitta Ranjan had none of these opportunities. Yet he seems to have achieved more than either of them by welding heterogeneous groups of people into a united nation and knitting together hundreds of impatient idealists, political adventurers, and ambitious self-seekers into a well-disciplined party.

With the last leader of the Progressive Party in the United States who also died in June, 1925, Chitta Ranjan had almost a family affinity. Chitta Ranjan, like La Follette, " was gritty and combative, voluble, untiring, abounding in information, terrific in attack, and absolutely fearless ".

A very common charge levelled against Chitta Ranjan during his lifetime, particularly by Anglo-Indian critics, was that he very often stirred up excitement which he could not lay or control. It is a strange coincidence in human history that such a charge has been levelled against almost every great man in all ages, climes and countries. A similar charge was brought against Gladstone by his political critics, and Lord Morley's refutation of it applies almost with equal force in the case of Chitta Ranjan. In defending this aspect of Gladstone's life, Morley says :<sup>1</sup>

" To charge him with habitually rousing popular forces into dangerous excitement, is to ignore or mis-read his action in some of the most critical of his movements. ' Here is a

<sup>1</sup> Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, Vol. 3.

man', said Huxley, 'with the greatest intellect in Europe, and yet he debases it by simply following majorities and the crowd.' He was called a mere mirror of the passing humours and intellectual confusions of the popular mind. He had nothing, said his detractors, but a sort of clever pilot's eye for winds and currents, and the rising of the tide to the exact height that would float him and his cargo over the bar. All this is the exact opposite of the truth. What he thought was that the statesman's gift consisted in insight into the facts of a particular era, disclosing the existence of material for forming public opinion and directing public opinion to a given purpose. In every one of his achievements of high mark—even in his last marked failure of achievement—he expressly formed, or endeavoured to form and create, the public opinion upon which he knew that in the last resort he must depend."

After he had overthrown dyarchy for a second time, the bitterness of the Government and the Anglo-Indian Press against him reached its climax. The Serajunge Resolution, extolling the patriotism of a political assassin, was seized on by Chitta Ranjan's political enemies as an opportunity to crush his growing influence in the country, and brought down upon him the wrath of India's white rulers on both sides of the Suez Canal. At this time Lord Peel, a previous Secretary of State for India, was egging on the MacDonald Government to prosecute Chitta Ranjan Das for the part he had taken in the Serajunge Resolution, which was interpreted as nothing short of incitement to murder. In declining to put Chitta Ranjan on trial or deport him, Lord Olivier, Secretary of State for India in the Labour Government of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, gave a remarkable testimony to the character of Chitta Ranjan on the authority of the Governor of Bengal. Lord Lytton had informed Lord Olivier that "Mr. Das in India had the reputation of being a particularly upright and scrupulous politician, second only to Gandhi himself in saintliness of character".

This statement, made on the floor of the House of Lords, caused considerable surprise, and evoked scornful comments

both in India and England, and was described in some quarters as extraordinarily "wide of the mark". It was openly stated that a man who in his youth was a *bon viveur* and lavish with his money, and unscrupulous in his political methods, who had publicly declared that all means, no matter what, would always justify the end, was hardly a person who could be described in the language that Lord Olivier had used. Chitta Ranjan's political honesty and integrity of purpose may not have been as transparent as those of Mr. Gandhi, but we have no doubt that after coming into close personal contact with the Saint of Sabarmati, he did his best to reach a higher moral and spiritual plane, and, after 1924, he made a supreme effort to justify Lord Olivier's description of his character.

Through renunciation and sacrifice in the later years of his life, he had elevated his emotionalism into a spiritual force, and had touched the right chord in the very soul of India, which has been, and still remains, more spiritual than material. Rabindra Nath Tagore has summed up the life work of this great Bengali in the following beautiful message :

" Man truly reveals himself through his gift, and the best gift that Chitta Ranjan has left for his countrymen is not any particular political or social programme, but the creative force of a great aspiration that has taken a deathless form in the sacrifice which his life represented."

## CHAPTER XVIII

### POSTSCRIPT

CHITTA RANJAN died on June 16th, 1925. In order to make this book a complete record of the history of Bengal for the first quarter of the twentieth century, it is necessary to mention here the outstanding events of the remaining months of the year. A few days after the death of Chitta Ranjan, Lord Birkenhead declared in the House of Lords that he was not prepared to broaden the basis of the Indian constitution until Indian nationalists had reconsidered their position in the matter of giving the Reforms a decent trial. On his return to India early in August, and in opening the new session of the Central Legislature, Lord Reading repeated the declaration. About the end of the year a bill based on the recommendations of the Lee Commission was passed by Parliament, insuring greater security for the members of the Superior Services, with generous provisions for overseas allowances, proportionate pension, free passage, etc. In December Lord Reading passed an Ordinance withdrawing the excise duties on the manufacture of a certain description of cotton. The year concluded with a session of the Indian National Congress at Cawnpore, presided over by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, in which it was resolved to give the Government an ultimatum in March, 1926, either to convene a Round Table Conference or to broaden the basis of the Indian constitution, and if the Government failed to respond to it in due time, the Swarajist members of the various Councils would abstain from taking an active interest in the work of the Legislatures. In this Congress also Mr. Gandhi publicly announced his decision to avoid the muddy waters of Indian politics for a definite period.

## APPENDIX A

### BANDE MATARAM

(TRANSLATION IN PROSE BY SRI AUROBINDO GHOSE)

I BOW to thee, Mother,  
richly-watered, richly-fruited,  
cool with the winds of the south,  
dark with the crops of the harvests,  
the Mother !

Her strands rejoicing in the glory of the moonlight,  
her lands clothed beautifully with her trees in flowering bloom,  
sweet of laughter, sweet of speech,  
the Mother, giver of boons, giver of bliss !

Terrible with the clamorous shout of seventy million throats,  
and the sharpness of swords raised in twice seventy million hands,  
Who saith to thee, Mother, that thou art weak ?

Holder of multitudinous strength,  
I bow to her who saves,  
to her who drives from her the armies of her foemen,  
the Mother !

Thou art knowledge, thou art conduct,  
thou our heart, thou our soul,  
for thou art the life in our body,  
in the arm thou art might, O Mother,  
in the heart, O Mother, thou art love and faith.

It is thy image we raise in every temple.  
For thou art Durga holding her ten weapons of war,  
Kamala at play in the lotuses  
and Speech, the goddess, giver of all lore,  
To thee I bow !

I bow to thee, goddess of wealth, pure and peerless,  
richly-watered, richly-fruited, the Mother !

I bow to thee Mother  
dark-hued, candid,  
sweetly smiling, jewelled and adorned,  
the holder of wealth, the lady of plenty  
the Mother !

## APPENDIX B

### PROCLAMATION OF THE KING-EMPEROR TO THE PRINCES AND PEOPLES OF INDIA

THE 2ND NOVEMBER, 1908

It is now fifty years since Queen Victoria, my beloved Mother, and my August Predecessor on the throne of these realms, for divers weighty reasons, with the advice and consent of Parliament, took upon herself the government of the territories theretofore administered by the East India Company. I deem this a fitting anniversary on which to greet the Princes and Peoples of India, in commemoration of the exalted task then solemnly undertaken. Half a century is but a brief span in your long annals, yet this half century that ends to-day will stand amid the floods of your historic ages, a far-shining landmark. The proclamation of the direct supremacy of the Crown sealed the unity of Indian Government and opened a new era. The journey was arduous, and the advance may have sometimes seemed slow ; but the incorporation of many strangely diversified communities, and of some three hundred millions of the human race, under British guidance and control has proceeded steadfastly and without pause. We survey our labours of the past half century with clear gaze and good conscience.

Difficulties such as attend all human rule in every age and place, have risen up from day to day. They have been faced by the servants of the British Crown with toil and courage and patience, with deep counsel and a resolution that has never faltered nor shaken. If errors have occurred, the agents of my Government have spared no pains and no self-sacrifice to correct them ; if abuses have been proved, vigorous hands have laboured to apply a remedy.

No secret of empire can avert the scourge of drought and plague, but experienced administrators have done all that skill and devotion are capable of doing, to mitigate those dire calamities of Nature. For a longer period than was ever known in your land before, you have escaped the dire calamities of War within your borders. Internal peace has been unbroken.

In the great charter of 1858 Queen Victoria gave you noble assurance of her earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement, and to administer the government for the benefit of all resident therein. The schemes that have been diligently framed and executed for promoting your material convenience and advance—schemes unsurpassed in their magnitude and their boldness—bear witness before the world to the zeal with which that benignant promise has been fulfilled.

The rights and privileges of the Feudatory Princes and Ruling Chiefs have been respected, preserved, and guarded; and the loyalty of their allegiance has been unswerving. No man among my subjects has been favoured, molested, or disquieted, by reason of his religious belief or worship. All men have enjoyed protection of the law. The law itself has been administered without disrespect to creed or caste, or to usages and ideas rooted in your civilization. It has been simplified in form, and its machinery adjusted to the requirements of ancient communities slowly entering a new world.

The charge confided to my Government concerns the destinies of countless multitudes of men now and for ages to come; and it is a paramount duty to repress with a stern arm guilty conspiracies that have no just cause and no serious aim. These conspiracies I know to be abhorrent to the loyal and faithful character of the vast hosts of my Indian subjects, and I will not suffer them to turn me aside from my task of building up the fabric of security and order.

Unwilling that this historic anniversary should pass without some signal mark of Royal clemency and grace, I have directed that, as was ordered on the memorable occasion of the Coronation Durbar in 1903, the sentences of persons whom our courts have duly punished for offences against the law, should be remitted, or in various degrees reduced; and it is my wish that such wrongdoers may remain mindful of this act of mercy, and may conduct themselves without offence henceforth.

Steps are being continuously taken towards obliterating distinctions of race as the test for access to posts of public authority and power. In this path I confidently expect and intend the progress henceforward to be steadfast and sure, as education spreads, experience ripens, and the lessons of responsibility are well learned by the keen intelligence and apt capabilities of India.

From the first, the principle of representative institutions began to be gradually introduced, and the time has come when, in the judgment of my Viceroy and Governor-General and others of my counsellors, that principle may be prudently extended.



Important classes among you, representing ideas that have been fostered and encouraged by British rule, claim equality of citizenship, and a greater share in legislation and government. The politic satisfaction of such a claim will strengthen, not impair, existing authority and power. Administration will be all the more efficient, if the officers who conduct it have greater opportunities of regular contact with those whom it affects, and with those who influence and reflect common opinion about it. I will not speak of the measures that are now being diligently framed for these objects. They will speedily be made known to you, and will, I am very confident, mark a notable stage in the beneficent progress of your affairs.

I recognize the valour and fidelity of my Indian troops, and at the New Year I have ordered that opportunity should be taken to show in substantial form this my high appreciation of their martial instincts, their splendid discipline, and their faithful readiness of service.

The welfare of India was one of the objects dearest to the heart of Queen Victoria. By me, ever since my visit in 1875, the interests of India, its Princes and Peoples, have been watched with an affectionate solicitude that time cannot weaken. My dear Son, the Prince of Wales, and the Princess of Wales, returned from their sojourn among you with warm attachment to your land, and true and earnest interest in its well-being and content. These sincere feelings of active sympathy and hope for India on the part of my Royal House and Line, only represent, and they do most truly represent, the deep and united will and purpose of the people of this Kingdom.

May divine protection and favour strengthen the wisdom and mutual goodwill that are needed, for the achievement of a task as glorious as was ever committed to rulers and subjects in any State or Empire of recorded time.

## APPENDIX C

### CHITTA RANJAN DAS'S PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT FARIDPORE

(BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE, 2ND MAY, 1925)

AGAIN and again has India asked, " Which way lies Salvation ? " In the dim past, it was the obstinate questioning of the individual Soul,—weary of shadows and seeking for Reality. In the living present, it is the tortured cry of the Soul of India.

Let me put this question to you again so that we may obtain a clear vision as to what it is that we must accomplish.

As with the individual, so with the Nation, the question is to find out the meaning of deliverance from bondage and, let me add, sin. It is a sin of those who forge the fetters of bondage. It is also a sin of those who allow the fetters to be forged.

Many items have been presented—Self-Government, Home Rule, Independence, and Swaraj—but these are all names unless the full implications are vividly realized and in the process of such realization must come a consideration of the method of attaining the object in view.

There are those who declare in favour of peaceful and legitimate methods. There are others who claim that, without the use of force or violence, Swaraj is impossible of attainment.

I desire to offer only a few suggestions to help you in deciding these momentous questions. Let the Bengal Provincial Conference declare in no uncertain voice what is the national ideal of freedom, and what is the method it calls upon the country to adopt for the fulfilment of that very ideal.

#### INDEPENDENCE DOES NOT NECESSARILY IMPLY SWARAJ.

Independence, to my mind, is a narrower ideal than that of Swaraj. It implies, it is true, the negative of dependence ; but by itself it gives us no positive ideal. I do not for a moment suggest that independence is not consistent with Swaraj. But what is necessary is not mere independence, but the establishment of Swaraj. India may be independent to-morrow in the sense that the British people may leave us to our destiny, but that will not necessarily give us what I understand by " Swaraj ". As I

pointed out in my Presidential address at Gaya, India presents an interesting but a complicated problem of consolidating the many apparently conflicting elements which go to make up the Indian people. This work of consolidation is a long process, may even be a weary process; but without this, no Swaraj is possible. Herein lies the great wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi's constructive programme. . . . With that programme I entirely agree and I cannot but too strongly urge upon my countrymen to give it not merely an intellectual assent, but practical support by working it out to the fullest extent.

Independence, in the second place, does not give you that idea of order which is the essence of Swaraj. The work of consolidation which I have mentioned means the establishment of that order. But let it be clearly understood that what is sought to be established must be consistent with the genius, the temperament and the traditions of the Indian people. To my mind, Swaraj implies, firstly, that we must have the freedom of working out the consolidation of the diverse elements of the Indian people; secondly, we must proceed with this work on National lines, not going back two thousand years ago, but going forward in the light and in the spirit of our national genius and temperament. For instance, when I speak of order, I mean a thing which is totally different from the idea of discipline which obtains in Europe. In Europe, the foundation of society and Government is discipline; and the spirit of discipline upon which everything rests is entirely military; and discipline, which has made England what she is to-day, is also of the same military type. It is not for me to decry European civilization. That is their way and they must fulfil themselves. But our way is not their way and we must also fulfil ourselves. Thirdly, in the work before us, we must not be obstructed by any foreign power.

What then have we to fix upon in the matter of ideal is what I call Swaraj, and not mere independence, which may be the negation of Swaraj. When we are asked as to what is our national ideal of freedom, the only answer which is possible to give is Swaraj. I do not like either Home Rule or Self-Government. Possibly they come within what I have described as Swaraj. But my culture, somehow or other, is antagonistic to the word "rule"—be it Home Rule or Foreign Rule. My objection to the word Self-Government is exactly the same. If it is defined as government by self and for self, my objection may be met; but, in that case, Swaraj includes all those elements.

#### WITHIN OR WITHOUT THE EMPIRE ?

Then comes the question as to whether this ideal is to be realized within the Empire or outside it? The answer which the

Congress has always given is " within the Empire, if the Empire will recognize our rights ", and " outside the Empire ", if it does not. We must have opportunity to live our life,—opportunity for self-realization, self-development, and self-fulfilment. The question is of living our life. If the Empire furnishes sufficient scope for the growth and development of our national life, the Empire idea is to be preferred. If, on the contrary, the Empire, like the Car of Jagannath, crushes our life in the sweep of its imperialistic march, there will be justification for the idea of the establishment of Swaraj outside the Empire.

Indeed, the Empire idea gives us a vivid sense of many advantages. Dominion status to-day is in no sense servitude. It is essentially an alliance by consent of those who form part of the Empire for material advantages in the real spirit of co-operation. Free alliance necessarily carries with it the right of separation. Before the War, a separatist tendency was growing up in several parts of the Empire, but after the War it is generally believed that it is only as a great confederation, that the Empire or its component parts can live. It is realized that under modern conditions no nation can live in isolation, and the Dominion status, while it affords complete protection to each constituent composing the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire, secures to each the right to realize itself, develop itself and fulfil itself, and therefore it expresses and implies all the elements of Swaraj which I have mentioned.

To me, the idea is specially attractive, because of its deep spiritual significance. I believe in world-peace, in the ultimate federation of the world. I think that the great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire—a federation of diverse races, each with its distinct life, distinct civilization, its distinct mental outlook—if properly led by wise statesmen at the helm, is bound to make lasting contributions to the great problem,—the problem of knitting the world into the greatest federation the mind can conceive, the federation of the human race. For the development of the idea involves apparent sacrifice on the part of the constituent nations, and it certainly involves the giving up for good the Empire idea with its ugly attribute of domination. I think it is for the good of India, for the good of the world, that India should strive for freedom within the Commonwealth, and so serve the cause of humanity.

#### THE METHOD ; THE CASE AGAINST VIOLENCE

I now come to the question of method. In my judgment, the method is always a part of the ideal. So that, when we are considering the question of method, we cannot forget the larger aspect of the object we have in view.

Viewed in this light, the method of violence is hardly in keeping with our life and culture. I am not suggesting for a moment that the History of India shows no wars, nor the application of violence. Every superficial student of our history knows that it is not so. But sometimes things are forced upon our life which a critical student of our history must know how to separate from the real bent of our genius. Violence is not a part of our being, as it is of Europe. That violence in Europe is checked by a system of law, which in the ultimate resort, is also based on physical force. The Indian people has always been in the habit of following traditions and customs and thus keeping itself free from violent methods. Our village organizations were a marvel of non-violent activities. Our institutions have always grown naturally like the unfolding of a flower. Strifes there have been of the intellect; cravings there have been of the Soul; disputes and quarrels have always arisen but only to be settled by peaceful arbitration. Anything contrary or antagonistic to this temperament, is a method which is not only immoral from the highest stand-point, but is bound to fail. I have no hesitation in proclaiming my conviction that our freedom will never be won by revolutionary violence. In the next place, apart from the special psychology of the Indian mind, how is it possible, by offering such violence, as it is possible for a subject race to offer, to contend against the highly organized governmental violence of the present day? It is no use quoting the incidents of the French and other Revolutions. Those were days when the people fought with spikes and often won. Is it conceivable that at the present moment we can overthrow any organized Government of the modern type by such method? I venture to think that any such armed revolution would be impossible even in England to-day.

In the next place, the application of violence cuts at the root of that consolidation, without which, as I have said, the attainment of Swaraj is impossible. Violence is sure to be followed by more violence on the part of the Government, and repression may be so violent, that its only effect on the Indian people would be to check their enthusiasm for Swaraj. I ask those young men who are addicted to revolutionary methods: do they think that the people will side with them? When life and property is threatened, the inevitable result is, that the people who suffer or who think they may suffer, recoil from such activities. This method therefore is impractical. Far be it from me to say one word against the honesty of purpose or the ardour of patriotism which these young men are capable of showing. But, as I said, the method is unsuited to our temperament; therefore, the application of it is, to quote the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "waste of time and energy". I appeal to the young men of

Bengal who may even in their heart of hearts think in favour of violent methods, to desist from such thought, and, I appeal to the Bengal Provincial Conference to declare clearly and unequivocally, that in its opinion freedom cannot be achieved by such methods.

But if I am against the application of such methods, I feel bound to point out that it is the violence of the Government which has to a great extent helped the revolutionary movement in Bengal. I believe it is Professor Dicey who points out that for the last thirty years there has been a singular decline among modern Englishmen in their respect or reverence for law and order, and he shows that this result is directly traceable to modern legislation, which has had the effect of diminishing the authority of the law courts, and thereby imperilling the rule of law. In other words, violence always begets violence, and if the Government embarks on a career of lawlessness for the purpose of stifling legitimate activities, it cannot but bring into existence, what Dicey calls, "a zeal for lawlessness" in the subject. The history of India, and particularly of Bengal, supports the observation of Professor Dicey.

[After this Chitta Ranjan went on to trace the origin and development of revolutionary activities in Bengal and gave a complete chronology of the leading events in India which occurred from 1905-1924. But as this portion of the speech was written by me for Chitta Ranjan Das, and as I have made use of it in the text of the book I have omitted it at this place.]

#### THE INJUSTICE OF THE ORDINANCE

The new Ordinance Act is a misguided attempt to perpetrate violence upon the people. The whole of India has with one voice condemned it, and I cannot trust myself to express my feeling about it in fitting terms, as I desire to speak with all restraint. I shall content myself by saying that I unhesitatingly condemn it, and I have given the only answer which it is possible for any Indian to give to the recent speech of Lord Birkenhead inviting me to co-operate with the Government in its repressive policy.

You will remember that Lord Birkenhead said that the Ordinance has not hurt anybody but the criminals. May I point out that His Lordship here is begging the whole question? We deny that the men imprisoned under the Ordinance are criminals and the only way to decide as to whether they are criminals or not is to hold an open trial and proceed, not on secret information, but on actual evidence which might be tested in open Court. The insecurity to which eminent writers of Constitutional history in England have referred is the insecurity

to the public by the attempt of the Executive to arrogate to itself the position of a Court of Law.

I will not weary you by dealing with each particular case which has been brought forward by the Government as a justification for the policy of repression. . . . I must also point out that it is difficult to believe in the statement put forward in support of the repressive measures by the Government. I shall quote only one instance and I have done. Speaking of the arrest and detention of the nine Bengali gentlemen, including Sriji Krishna Kumar Mitra and the late Aswini Kumar Dutt, on December 11th, 1908, Lord Morley, the then Secretary of State, in his letter to Lord Minto stated as follows :

" You have nine men locked up a year ago by *lettre de cachet* because you believed them to be criminally connected . . . with these plots."

But let us hear what Sir Hugh Stephenson has to say on the point. It was only the other day that he said from his place in the Bengal Council :

" I should like to mention three cases which have been used in the press to throw doubts on the efficiency, if not on the bonafides of our methods. The first two are those of Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt and Babu Krishna Kumar Mitra. It has been said, that no one will believe that they had anything to do with terrorist crime and that, therefore, the secret information of the police must have been false, and Government may equally well be deceived by such false information now. I never knew Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt, but I am glad to think that Babu Krishna Kumar Mitra is a personal friend, and I entirely acquit him of sympathy with terrorist crime. But as far as I know none has ever accused him or Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt of promoting crime, still less of taking part in it. The Bengal Government asked for the use of Regulation III in the case of Babu Aswini Kumar Dutt because of his whirlwind campaign of anti-Government speeches."

#### " REPRESSION THE MOST VIOLENT FORM OF VIOLENCE "

It follows conclusively that the discretionary power which the Government in this country enjoys of promulgating illegal laws is capable of being abused. Indeed, it must be so from the very nature of things. The history of the world shows that bureaucratic governments have always tried to consolidate their power through the process of " Law and Order " which is an excellent phrase, but which means, in countries where the rule of law does not prevail, the exercise by persons in authority of wide arbitrary or discretionary powers of constraint.

Repression is a process in the consolidation of arbitrary powers—and I condemn the violence of the Government—for repression is the most violent form of violence—just as I condemn violence as a method of winning political liberty. I must warn the Government that the policy of repression is a short-sighted policy. It may strengthen its hands for the time being, but I am sure Lord Birkenhead realizes that, as an instrument of Government, it is bound to fail.

#### NO CO-OPERATION IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF DISTRUST

I have so far dealt with the question of method in order to show that violence is both immoral and inexpedient,—immoral, because it is not in keeping with our life and culture ; inexpedient, because it is inconceivable that at the present day we can overthrow any organized Government by bombs and revolvers. Then the question arises what method should we pursue in order to win Swaraj ? We have been gravely told that Swaraj is within our grasp if only we co-operate with the Government in working the present Reform Act. With regard to the argument, my position is perfectly clear, and I should like to restate it, so that there may be no controversy about it. If I were satisfied that the present Act has transferred any real responsibility to the people,—that there is opportunity for self-realization, self-development and self-fulfilment under the Act, I would unhesitatingly co-operate with the Government and begin the constructive work within the Council Chamber. But I am not willing to sacrifice the substance for the shadow. I will not detain you to-day with any argument tending to show that the Reform Act has not transferred any responsibility to the people. I have dealt with the question exhaustively in my address at the Ahmedabad Congress, and if further arguments are necessary they will be found in the evidence given before the Muddiman Committee by men whose moderation cannot be questioned by the Government. The basis of the present Act is distrust of the Ministers ; and there can be no talk of co-operation in an atmosphere of distrust. At the same time, I must make clear my position—and I hope of the Bengal Provincial Conference—that, provided some real responsibility is transferred to the people, there is no reason why we should not co-operate with the Government. But to make such co-operation real and effective, two things are necessary. First, there should be a real change of heart in our rulers ; secondly, Swaraj in the fullest sense must be guaranteed to us at once, to come automatically in the near future. I have always maintained that we should make large sacrifices in order to have the opportunity to begin our constructive work at once ; and I think you will realize that a few years are nothing in the history of a nation, provided



the foundation of Swaraj is laid at once and there is a real change of heart both in the rulers and in the subject. You will tell me that "change of heart" is a fine phrase, and that some practical demonstration should be given of that change. I agree. But the demonstration must necessarily depend on the atmosphere created by any proposed settlement. An atmosphere of trust or distrust may be easily felt, and in any matter of peaceful settlement a great deal more depends on the spirit behind the terms than the actual terms themselves. It is impossible to lay down the exact terms of any such settlement at the present moment; but if a change of heart takes place and negotiations are carried on by both sides in the spirit of peace, harmony and mutual trust, such terms are capable of precise definition.

#### OFFERS TO THE GOVERNMENT

A few suggestions may, however, be made, having regard to what is nearest to the hearts of the people of Bengal.

In the first place, the Government should divest itself of its wide discretionary powers of constraint, and follow it up by proclaiming a general amnesty of all political prisoners. In the next place, the Government should guarantee to us the fullest recognition of our right to the establishment of Swaraj within the commonwealth, in the near future, and in the meantime, till Swaraj comes, a sure and sufficient foundation must necessarily be a matter of negotiation and settlement—settlement not only between the Government and the people as a whole, but also between the different communities, not excluding the European and Anglo-Indian communities, as I said in my presidential speech at Gaya.

#### THE TIME FOR CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

I must also add that we, on our part, should be in a position to give some sort of undertaking that we shall not by word, deed or gesture, encourage the revolutionary propaganda and that we shall make every effort to put an end to such a movement. This undertaking is not needed, for the Bengal Provincial Conference has never identified itself with the revolutionary propaganda. I believe that, with a change of heart on the part of the Government, there is bound to be produced a change in the mental outlook of the revolutionary; and with a settlement such as I have described, the revolutionary movement will be a thing of the past, and the very power and energy which is now directed against the Government will be devoted to the real service of the people.

If, however, our offer of a settlement should not meet with any response, we must go on with our national work on the lines which we have pursued for the last two years so that it may become impossible for the Government to carry on the administration of the country, except by the exercise of its exceptional powers. There are some who shrink from this step, who point out with perfect logic that we have no right to refuse supplies unless we are prepared to go to the country and advise the subject not to pay the taxes. My answer is that I want to create the atmosphere for national civil disobedience, which must be the last weapon in the hands of the people striving for freedom. I have no use for historical precedent ; but if reference is to be made to English history in our present struggle, I may point out that refusal to pay taxes in England in the time of the Stuarts came many years after the determination of the Parliament to refuse supplies. The atmosphere for civil disobedience is created by compelling the Government to raise money by the exercise of its exceptional powers ; and when the time comes we shall not hesitate to advise our countrymen not to pay taxes which are sought to be raised by the exercise of the exceptional powers vested in the Government.

I hope that time will never come—indeed I see signs of a real change of heart everywhere—but let us face the fact that it may be necessary for us to have recourse to civil disobedience if all hope of reconciliation fails. But let us also face the fact that civil disobedience requires a high stage of organization, an infinite capacity for sacrifice, and a real desire to subordinate personal and communal interest to the common interest of the nation ; and I can see little hope of India ever being ready for civil disobedience until she is prepared to work Mahatma Gandhi's constructive programme to the fullest extent. The end, however, must be kept in view, for freedom must be won.

#### THE GOAL

But, as I have said, I see signs of reconciliation everywhere. The world is tired of conflicts, and I think I see a real desire for construction, for consolidation. I believe that India has a great part to play in the history of the world. She has a message to deliver, and she is anxious to deliver it in the Council Chamber of that great Commonwealth of nations, of which I have spoken. Will British statesmen rise to the occasion ? To them I say : you can have peace to-day on terms that are honourable both to you and to us. To the British community in India, I say : you have come with traditions of freedom, and you cannot refuse to co-operate with us in our national struggle, provided we recognize your right to be heard in the final settlement. To the people of

Bengal I say : you have made great sacrifices for daring to win political freedom, and on you has fallen the brunt of official wrath. The time is not yet for putting aside your political weapons. Fight hard, but fight clean ; and when the time for settlement comes, as it is bound to come, enter the peace conference, not in a spirit of arrogance, but with becoming humility, so that it may be said of you that you were greater in your achievement than in adversity.

Nationalism is merely a process in self-realization, self-development and self-fulfilment. It is not an end in itself. The growth and development of nationalism is necessary, so that humanity may realize itself, develop itself and fulfil itself ; and I beseech you when you discuss the terms of settlement, do not forget the larger claim of humanity in your pride of nationalism. For myself, I have a clear vision as to what I seek. I seek a federation of the states of India—each free to follow, as it must follow, the culture and the tradition of its own people : each bound to each in the common service of all : a great federation within a greater federation, the federation of free nations, whose freedom is the measure of their service to man, and whose unity the hope of peace among the peoples of the earth.

## APPENDIX D

### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSIONS OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS,  
HELD AT GAYA IN DECEMBER, 1922

#### "LAW AND ORDER."

GENTLEMEN, the time is a critical one and it is important to seize upon the real issue which divides the people from the Bureaucracy and its Indian allies. During the period of repression which began about this time last year it was this issue which pressed itself on our attention. This policy of repression was supported and in some cases instigated by the Moderate Leaders who are in the Executive Government. I do not charge those who supported the Government with dishonesty or want of patriotism. I say they were led away by the battle cry of Law and Order. And it is because I believe that there is a fundamental confusion of thought behind this attitude of mind that I propose to discuss this plea of Law and Order. "Law and Order" has indeed been the last refuge of Bureaucracies all over the world.

It has been gravely asserted not only by the Bureaucracy but also by its apologists, the Moderate Party, that a settled Government is the first necessity of any people and that the subject has no right to present his grievances except in a constitutional way, by which I understand in some way recognized by the constitution. If you cannot actively co-operate in the maintenance of "the law of the land" they say "it is your duty as a responsible citizen to obey it passively. Non-resistance is the least that the Government is entitled to expect from you". This is the whole political philosophy of the Bureaucracy—the maintenance of law and order on the part of the Government, and an attitude of passive obedience and non-resistance on the part of the subject. But was not that the political philosophy of every English king from William the Conqueror to James II? And was not that the political philosophy of the Romanoffs, the Hohenzollerns and of the Bourbons? And yet freedom has come, where it has come, by disobedience of the very laws which were proclaimed in the name of law and order. Where the Government is arbitrary and despotic and the fundamental rights of the people are not recognized, it is idle to talk of law and order.

The doctrine has apparently made its way to this country from England. I shall, therefore, refer to English history to find out the truth about this doctrine. That history has recorded that most of the despots in England who exercised arbitrary sway over the people professed to act for the good of the people and for the maintenance of law and order. English absolutism from the Normans down to the Stuarts tried to put itself on a constitutional basis through the process of this very law and order. The pathetic speech delivered by Charles I just before his execution puts the whole doctrine in a nutshell. "For the people," he said, "truly I desire their liberty and freedom as much as anybody whatsoever, but I must tell you that their liberty and freedom consist in having Government, those laws by which their lives and their goods may be their own. It is not their having a share in the Government, that is nothing appertaining to them. A subject and a sovereign are clear different things." The doctrine of law and order could not be stated with more admirable clearness. But though the English kings acted constitutionally in the sense that their acts were in accordance with the letter of law and were covered by precedents, the subject always claimed that they were free to assert their fundamental rights and to wrest them from the king by force or insurrections. The doctrine of law and order received a rude shock when King John was obliged to put his signature to the Magna Charta on the 15th of June, 1215. The sixty-first clause of the Charter is important for our purpose securing as it did to the subject the liberty of rebellion as a means for enforcing the due observance of the Charter by the Crown. Adams, a celebrated writer of the English Constitutional History, says that the conditional right to rebel is as much at the foundation of the English constitution to-day as it was in 1215. But though the doctrine of law and order had received a rude shock, it did not altogether die; for in the intervening period the Crown claimed and asserted the right to raise money, not only by indirect taxes but also by forced loans and benevolences; and frequently exercised large legislative functions not only by applying what are known as suspending and dispensing powers but also by issuing proclamations. The crown claimed, as Hallam says, "not only a kind of supplemental right of legislation to perfect and carry out what the spirit of existing laws might require but also a paramount supremacy, called sometimes the king's absolute or sovereign power which sanctioned commands beyond the legal prerogative, *for the sake of public safety* whenever the council might judge to be ~~that~~ in hazard". By the time of the Stuarts the powers claimed by the Crown were recognized by the courts of law as well founded, and, to quote the words of Adams, "the forms of law became the engines for the perpetration of judicial murders".

It is necessary to remember that it was the process of law and order that helped to consolidate the powers of the Crown ; for it was again and again laid down by the Court of Exchequer that the power of taxation was vested in the Crown, where it was "*for the general benefit of the people*". As Adams says, "the Stuarts asserted a legal justification for everything done by them", and, "on the whole, history was with the king".

But how did the Commons meet this assertion of law and order ? They were strict non-co-operators both within and outside the Parliament. Within the Parliament they again and again refused to vote supplies unless their grievances were redressed. The king retorted by raising Customs duties on his own initiative and the Courts of law supported him. The Commons passed a resolution to the effect that persons paying them "should be reputed betrayers of liberties of England and enemies to the same". There was little doubt that revolution was on the land ; and King Charles finding himself in difficulty gave his Royal Assent to the Bill of Rights on the 17th of June, 1626. The Bill of Rights constitutes a triumph for non-co-operators ; for it was by their refusal to have any part or share in the administration of the country that the Commons compelled the king to acknowledge their rights. The events that followed between 1629 and 1640 made the history of England. In spite of the Bill of Rights the king continued to raise Customs duties, and Elliot and his friends were put on their trial. They refused to plead, and the result was disastrous for the arbitrary power of the king. The king levied ship money on the nation. The chief constables of various places replied that the Sheriffs had no authority to assess or tax any man without the consent of the Parliament. On the refusal on the part of the people to pay the taxes their cattle was distrained, and no purchaser could be found for them. The king took the opinion of the Exchequer Court on the question whether, "*when the good and the safety of the kingdom in general is concerned, and the whole kingdom is in danger*", mark how the formula has been copied verbatim in the Government of India Act, "may not the king . . . command all the subjects of his kingdom, to provide and furnish such number of ships, with men, victuals and munitions, and for such time as he shall think fit, *for the defence and safeguard of the kingdom from such peril*",—again the formula !—"and by law compel the doing thereof in case of refusal and refractoriness ? And whether in such case, is not the king sole judge, both of the danger, and when and how the same is to be prevented ?" The judges answered in the affirmative and maintained the answer in the celebrated case which Hampden brought before them.

I desire to emphasize one point, and that is, that throughout the long and bitter struggle between the Stuarts and Parliament,

the Stuarts acted for the maintenance of law and order, and there is no doubt that both law and history were on their side. On the eve of the civil war, the question that divided the parties was this : could the Crown in the maintenance of law and order claim the passive obedience of the subject, or was there any power of resistance in the subject, though that resistance might result in disorder and in breaches of law ? The adherents of the Parliament stood for the power and the majesty of the people, the authority and " independency of Parliament ", individual liberty, the right to resist, and the right to compel abdication and secure deposition of the Crown ; in a word, they stood for Man against the coercive powers of the State. The adherents of the Crown stood for indefeasible right, a right to claim passive obedience and secure non-resistance on the part of the subject through the process of law and order ; in a word, they stood for state coercion and compulsory co-operation against individual liberty.

The issue was decided in favour of Parliament, but, as it must happen in every war of arms, the victory for individual liberty was only temporary. Though the result of civil war was disastrous from the point of view of individual liberty and though it required another revolution, this time a non-violent revolution to put individual liberty on a sure foundation, " the knowledge that the subjects had sat in rude judgment on their king, man to man, speeded the slow emancipation of the mind from the shackles of custom and ancient reverence ".

The revolution of 1688—a bloodless revolution—secured for England that rule of law which is the only sure foundation for the maintenance of law and order. It completed the work which the Long Parliament had begun and which the execution of Charles I had interrupted. But how was the peaceful revolution of 1688 brought about ? By defiance of authority and by rigid adherence to the principle that it is the inalienable right of the subject to resist the exercise by the executive of wide, arbitrary or discretionary powers of constraint.

The principle for which the revolution of 1688 stood was triumphantly vindicated in the celebrated case of Dr. Sacheverell. In the course of a sermon which he had preached, he gave expression to the following sentiment. " The grand security of our Government and the very pillar upon which it stands, is founded upon the steady belief of the subjects' obligation to an absolute and unconditional obedience to the supreme power in all things lawful, and the utter illegality of resistance on any pretence whatsoever." This is the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance—the doctrine of law and order which is proclaimed to-day by every bureaucrat in the country, foreign or domestic, and which is supposed to be the last word on the subject's

duty and Government's rights. But mark how they solved the problem in England in 1710. The Commons impeached Dr. Sacheverell giving expression to a view so destructive of individual liberty, and the Lords, by a majority of votes, found him guilty. The speeches delivered in the courses of the trial are interesting. I desire to quote a few sentences from some of those speeches. Sir Joseph Jekyll, in the course of his speech said, "that as the law is the only measure of the Prince's authority, and the people's subjection, so the law derives its being and efficacy from common consent; and to place it on any other foundation than common consent, is to take away the obligation this notion of common consent puts both prince and people *under*, to observe the laws. . . . My Lords, as the doctrine of unlimited non-resistance was impliedly renounced by the whole nation in the revolution, so divers Acts of Parliament afterwards passed, expressing their renunciation, . . . and, therefore, I shall only say, that it can never be supposed that the laws were made to set up a despotic power to destroy themselves, and to warrant the subversion of a constitution of a Government which they were designed to establish and defend". Mr. Walpole put the whole argument in a nutshell when he said, "the doctrine of unlimited, unconditional passive obedience was first invented to support arbitrary and despotic power, and was never promoted or countenanced by any Government that had not designs, some time or other of making use of it". The argument against the doctrine of law and order could not be put more clearly or forcibly: for his argument comes to this, that the doctrine is not an honest one, if law and order is the process by which absolutism consolidates its powers and strengthens its hand. I will make one more quotation, and that is from the speech of Major-General Stanhope. "As to the doctrine itself of absolute non-resistance it should seem needless to prove by argument that it is inconsistent with the law of reason, with the law of nature, and with the practice of all ages and countries. . . . And, indeed, one may appeal to the practice of all churches, and of all States, and of all nations in the world, how they behaved themselves when they found their civil and religious constitutions invaded and oppressed by tyranny."

This, then, is the history of the freedom movement in England. The conclusion is irresistible that it is not by acquiescence in the doctrine of law and order that the English people have obtained the recognition of their fundamental rights. It follows from the survey that I have made, firstly, that no regulation is law unless it is based on the consent of the people; secondly, where such consent is wanting the people are under no obligation to obey; thirdly, where such laws are not only not based on the consent of



the people but profess to attack their fundamental rights, the subjects are entitled to compel their withdrawal by force or insurrections; fourthly, that law and order is, and has always been, a plea for absolutism; and lastly, there can be neither law nor order before the real reign of law begins.

I have dealt with the question at some length, as the question is a vital one, and there are many Moderates who still think that it is the duty of every loyal subject to assist the Government in the maintenance of law and order. The personal liberty of every Indian to-day depends to a great extent on the exercise by persons in authority of wide, arbitrary or discretionary powers. Where such powers are allowed the rule of law is denied. To find out the extent to which this exploded doctrine of law and order influences the minds of sober and learned men, you have only to read the Report of the Committee appointed to examine the Repressive Laws. You will find in the Report neither the vision of the patriot nor the wisdom of the statesman; but you will find an excessive worship of that much advertised, but much misunderstood, phrase "Law and Order". Why is Regulation 3 of 1818 to be amended and kept on the Statute Book? Because for the protection of the frontiers of India and the fulfilment of the responsibility of the Government of India in relation to Indian States, there must be some enactment to arm the Executive with powers to restrict the movements and activities of certain persons who, though not coming within the scope of any criminal law, have to be put under some measure of restraint. Why are the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908, and the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act, 1911, to be retained on the Statute Book? For the preservation of law and order. They little think, these learned gentlemen responsible for the Report, that these Statutes, giving, as they do, to the Executive, wide, arbitrary and discretionary powers of constraint, constitute a state of things wherein it is the duty of every individual to resist and to defy the tyranny of such lawless laws. These Statutes in themselves constitute a breach of law and order, for law and order is the result of the rule of law; and where you deny the existence of the rule of law, you cannot turn round and say, "it is your duty as law-abiding citizens to obey the law".

We have had abundance of this law and order during the last few years of our national history. The last affront delivered to the nation was the promulgation of an executive order under the authority of the Criminal Law Amendment Act making the legitimate work of Congress Volunteers illegal and criminal. This was supported by our Moderate friends on the ground that it is the duty of the law-abiding subject to support the maintenance of law and order. The doctrine, as I said before, has travelled

all the way from the shores of England. But may I ask—is there one argument advanced to-day by the bureaucracy and its friends which was not advanced with equal clearness by the Stuarts? When the Stuarts arrogated to themselves a discretionary power of committing to prison all persons who were on any account obnoxious to the Court, they made the excuse that the power was necessary for the safety of the nation. And the power was resisted in England, not because it was never exercised for the safety of the nation, but because the existence of the power was inconsistent with the existence at the same time of individual liberty. When the Stuarts claimed the right to legislate by proclamations and by wide exercise of suspending and dispersing powers, they did so on the express ground that such legislation was necessary for public safety. That right was denied by the English nation, not because such legislation was not necessary for public safety, but because such right could not co-exist with the fundamental right of the nation to legislate for itself. Is the power of the Governor-General to certify that the passage of a Bill is essential for safety or tranquillity or interest of British India any different from the power claimed by the Stuarts? There is indeed a striking resemblance between the power conferred on the Governor-General and the Governors of the provinces and the powers claimed by the Tudors and the Stuarts. When the Stuarts claimed the right to raise revenue on their own initiative, they disclaimed any intention to exercise such right except "*when the good and safety of the kingdom in general is concerned and the whole kingdom is in danger*". That right was resisted in England, not because the revenues raised by them were not necessary for the good and safety of the kingdom, but because that right was inconsistent with the fundamental right of the people to pay such taxes only as were determined by the representatives of the people for the people. Is the power conferred on the Governor to certify that the expenditure provided for by a particular demand not assented to by the Legislature is essential to the discharge of his responsibility for the subject any different from the power claimed by the Stuarts? It should be patent to everybody that we do not live under the rule of law, and the history of England has proclaimed that it is idle to talk of the maintenance of law and order when large discretionary powers of constraint are vested in the Executive. The manhood of England triumphantly resisted the pretensions of "Law and Order". If there is manhood in India to-day, India will successfully resist the same pretensions advanced by the Indian bureaucracy.

I have quoted from English history at length because the argument furnished by that history appeals to most people who

are frightened by popular movements into raising the cry of "law and order", and who think that the development of the great Indian nation must follow the lines laid down in that history. For myself I oppose the pretensions of "law and order", not on historical precedent, but on the ground that it is the inalienable right of every individual and of every nation to stand on truth and to offer a stubborn resistance to the promulgation of lawless laws. There was a law in the time of Christ which forbade the people from eating on the Sabbath, but allowed the priests to profane the Sabbath. And how Christ dealt with the law is narrated in the New Testament.

"At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

"But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day.

"But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred and they that were with him;

"How he entered into the house of God and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?

"Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?"

The truth is, that law and order is for Man, and not Man for Law and Order. The development of nationality is a sacred task and anything which impedes that task is an obstacle which the very force and power of nationality must overcome. If, therefore, you interpose a doctrine to impede the task, why, the doctrine must go. If you have recourse to law and order to establish and defend the rule of law then your law and order is entitled to claim the respect of all law-abiding citizens; but, as soon as you have recourse to it not to establish and defend the rule of law, but to destroy and attack it, there is no longer any obligation on us to respect it, for a Higher Law, the natural law, the law of God, compels us to offer our stubborn resistance to it. When I find something put forward in the sacred name of law and order which is deliberately intended to hinder the growth, the development, and the self-realization of the nation, I have no hesitation whatever in proclaiming that such law and order is an outrage on man and an insult to God.

But though our Moderate friends are often deluded by the battle cry of law and order, I rejoice when I hear that cry. "It means that the Bureaucracy is in danger and that the Bureaucracy has realized its danger. It is not without reason that a false

issue is raised ; and the fact that a false issue has been raised fills me with hope and courage. I ask my countrymen to be patient and to press the charge. Freedom has already advanced when the alarm of law and order is sounded ; that is the history of Bureaucracies all over the world.

In the meantime it is our duty to keep our ideal steadfast. We must not forget that we are on the eve of great changes, that world forces are working all around us and that the battle of freedom has yet to be won.

#### NATIONALISM : THE IDEAL

What is the ideal which we must set before us ? The first and foremost is the ideal of nationalism. Now what is nationalism ? It is, I conceive, a process through which a nation expresses itself and finds itself, not in isolation from other nations, not in opposition to other nations, but as part of a great scheme by which, in seeking its own expression and therefore its own identity, it materially assists the self-expression and self-realization of other nations as well : Diversity is as real as unity. And in order that the unity of the world may be established it is essential that each nationality should proceed on its own line and find fulfilment in self-expression and self-realization. The nationality of which I am speaking must not be confused with the conception of nationality as it exists in Europe to-day. Nationalism in Europe is an aggressive nationalism, a selfish nationalism, a commercial nationalism of gain and loss. The gain of France is the loss of Germany, and the gain of Germany is the loss of France. Therefore French nationalism is nurtured on the hatred of Germany, and German nationalism is nurtured on the hatred of France. It is not yet realized that you cannot hurt Germany without hurting Humanity, and in consequence hurting France ; and that you cannot hurt France without hurting Humanity, and in consequence hurting Germany. That is European nationalism ; that is not the nationalism of which I am speaking to you to-day. I contend that each nationality constitutes a particular stream of the great unity, but no nation can fulfil itself unless and until it becomes itself and at the same time realizes its identity with Humanity. The whole problem of nationalism is therefore to find that stream and to face that destiny. If you find the current and establish a continuity with the past, then the process of self-expression has begun, and nothing can stop the growth of nationality.

Throughout the pages of Indian history, I find a great purpose unfolding itself. Movement after movement has swept over this vast country, apparently creating hostile forces, but in reality stimulating the vitality and moulding the life of the people into

one great nationality. If the Aryans and the non-Aryans met, it was for the purpose of making one people out of them. Brahmanism with its great culture succeeded in binding the whole of India and was indeed a mighty unifying force. Buddhism with its protests against Brahmanism served the same great historical purpose ; and from Magadha to Taxila was one great Buddhistic empire which succeeded not only in broadening the basis of Indian unity, but in creating, what is perhaps not less important, the greater India beyond the Himalayas and beyond the seas, so much so that the sacred city where we have met may be regarded as a place of pilgrimage of millions and millions of people of Asiatic races. Then came the Mahomedans of divers races, but with one culture which was their common heritage. For a time it looked as if here was a disintegrating force, an enemy to the growth of Indian nationalism, but the Mahomedans made their home in India, and, while they brought a new outlook and a wonderful vitality to the Indian life, with infinite wisdom, they did as little as possible to disturb the growth of life in the villages where India really lives. This new outlook was necessary for India ; and if the two sister streams met, it was only to fulfil themselves and face the destiny of Indian history. Then came the English with their alien culture, their foreign methods, delivering a rude shock to this growing nationality ; but the shock has only completed the unifying process so that the purpose of history is practically fulfilled. The great Indian nationality is in sight. It already stretches its hands across the Himalayas not only to Asia but to the whole of the world, not aggressively, but to demand its recognition, and to offer its contribution. I desire to emphasize that there is no hostility between the ideal of nationality and that of world peace. Nationalism is the process through which alone will world peace come. A full and unfettered growth of nationalism is necessary for world peace just as a full and unfettered growth of individuals is necessary for nationality. It is the conception of aggressive nationality in Europe that stands in the way of world peace ; but once the truth is grasped that it is not possible for a nation to inflict a loss on another nation without at the same time inflicting a loss on itself, the problem of Humanity is solved. The essential truth of nationality lies in this, that it is necessary for each nation to develop itself, express itself and realize itself, so that Humanity itself may develop itself, express itself and realize itself. It is my belief that this truth of nationality will endure, although, for the moment, unmindful of the real issue the nations are fighting amongst themselves ; and, if I am not mistaken, it is the very instinct of selfishness and self-preservation which will ultimately solve the problem, not the narrow and the mistaken

selfishness of the present, but a selfishness universalized by intellect and transfigured by spirit, a selfishness that will bring home to the nations of the world that in the efforts to put down their neighbours lies their own ruin and suppression.

We have, therefore, to foster the spirit of Nationality. True development of the Indian nation must necessarily lie in the path of Swaraj. A question has often been asked as to what is Swaraj. Swaraj is indefinable and is not to be confused with any particular system of Government. There is all the difference in the world between Swarayya and Samrayya. Swaraj is the natural expression of the national mind. The full outward expression of that mind covers, and must necessarily cover, the whole life history of a nation. Yet it is true that Swaraj begins when the true development of a nation begins, because, as I have said, Swaraj is the expression of the national mind. The question of nationalism, therefore, looked at from another point of view, is the same question as that of Swaraj. The question of all questions in India to-day is the attainment of Swaraj.

#### NON-VIOLENT NON-CO-OPERATION

I now come to the question of method. I have to repeat that it has been proved beyond any doubt that the method of non-violent non-co-operation is the only method which we must follow to secure a system of Government which may in reality be the foundation of Swaraj. It is hardly necessary to discuss the philosophy of non-co-operation. I shall simply state the different view points from which this question may be discussed. From the national point of view the method of non-co-operation means the attempt of the nation to concentrate upon its own energy and to stand on its own strength. From the ethical point of view, non-co-operation means the method of self-purification, the withdrawal from that which is injurious to the development of the nation, and therefore to the good of humanity. From the spiritual point of view, Swaraj means that isolation which in the language of Sadhana is called *protyahar*—that withdrawal from the forces which are foreign to our nature—an isolation and withdrawal which is necessary in order to bring out from our hidden depths the soul of the nation in all her glory. I do not desire to labour the point, but from every conceivable point of view, the method of non-violent non-co-operation must be regarded as the true method of "following in the path of Swaraj".

#### FORCE AND VIOLENCE

Doubt has, however, been expressed in some quarters about the soundness of the principle of non-violence. I cannot refuse to

acknowledge that there is a body of Indian opinion within the country as well as outside according to which non-violence is an ideal abstraction incapable of realization, and that the only way in which Swaraj can ever be attained is by the application of force and violence. I do not for a moment question the courage, sacrifice and patriotism of those who hold this view. I know that some of them have suffered for the cause which they believe to be true. But may I be permitted to point out that apart from any question of principle, history has proved over and over again the utter futility of revolutions brought about by force and violence. I am one of those who hold to non-violence on principle. But let us consider the question of expediency. Is it possible to attain Swaraj by violent means? The answer, which history gives is, an emphatic "No". Take all the formidable revolutions of the world.

#### THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The history of the French Revolution is the history of a struggle at the first instance between the Crown and the nobility on one side and the Representative Assemblies with armed Paris on the other. Both took to violence, one to the bayonet and the other to the pike. The pike succeeded because the bayonet was held with uncertain hands. And then, as is usual after the victory gained with violence, the popular party was sharply divided between two sections—the Girondins and the Jacobins. Again there was an appeal to force. The Girondins asked the provinces to rise in arms, the Jacobins asked Paris to rise in arms. Paris being nearer and stronger, the Girondins were defeated and sent to the guillotine—the Jacobins seized the power. But it did not take them many months to fall out among themselves. First Robespierre and Danton sent Hebert and Chaumette to the guillotine. Then Robespierre sent Danton to the guillotine. Robespierre in his turn was guillotined by Collot 'Billaud and Tallien. These men, again, were banished by others to the far off South America. If there was a slight difference of views between the Girondins and the Jacobins—there was practically none between the different sections of the Jacobins. The whole question was which of the various sections was to rule France. Force gave way to stronger force and at last under Napoleon France experienced a despotism similar to if not worse than the despotism of Louis XIV. As regards liberty there was not more liberty in France under the terrible Committee of Public Safety and Napoleon than under Louis XIV or Louis XV. The law of Prairial was certainly much worse than *Lettres de Cachet*. And the people—? On the Pont au Change, on the Place de Greve, in long sheds, Mercier, at the end of the

Revolution, saw working men at their repast. One's allotment of daily bread had sunk to an ounce-and-a-half. "Plates containing each three grilled herrings, sprinkled with shorn onions, wetted with a little vinegar; to this add some morsel of boiled prunes, and lentils swimming in a clear sauce; at these frugal tables I have seen them ranged by the hundred; consuming, without bread, their scant messes, far too moderate for the keenness of their appetite, and the extent of their stomach." "Seine water" remarks Carlyle grimly—"rushing plenteous by, will supply the deficiency." One cannot forget the exclamation of Carlyle in this connection:

"O Man of Toil" "Thy struggling and thy daring, these six long years of insurrection and tribulation, thou hast profited nothing by it, then? Thou consumest thy herring and water, in the blessed gold-red of evening. O why was the Earth so beautiful, becrimsoned with dawn and twilight, if man's dealings with man were to make it a vale of scarcity, of tears, not even soft tears? Destroying of Bastilles, discomfiting of Brunswicks, fronting of Principalities and Powers, of Earth and Tophet, all that thou hast dared and endured,—it was for a Republic of the Saloons? Aristocracy of Feudal Parchment has passed away with a mighty rushing; and now, by a natural course, we arrive at Aristocracy of the Moneybag. It is the course through which all European Societies are, at this hour, travelling. Apparently, a still baser sort of Aristocracy? An infinitely baser; the basest yet known."

Even to-day France is plodding her weary way towards Swaraj.

#### REVOLUTIONS IN ENGLAND.

The history of England proves the same truth. The revolution of the Barons in 1215 took away or purported to take away the power from the King; but the power fell into the hands of the aristocracy, and democracy did not share in the triumphs of the Barons. Thus the great Charter, as a great historian has observed, was not a Charter of Liberty but of Liberties. The revolution in the reign of Charles I produced a new dictator who suppressed freedom. The work which the Long Parliament began was interrupted by the revolution which followed the execution of the King, and it required another revolution, this time a bloodless revolution, to complete the work. I deny that the work is yet complete. The continual class war and the obvious economic injustice do not proclaim that freedom which England claimed for herself. I maintain that no people has yet succeeded in winning freedom by force and violence. The truth is that love of power is a formidable factor to be reckoned with, and those who



secure the power by violence will retain that power by violence. The use of violence degenerates them who use it, and it is not easy for them, having seized the power, to surrender it. And they find it easier to carry on the work of their predecessor, retaining their power in their own hands. Non-violence does not carry with it that degeneration which is inherent in the use of violence.

### REVOLUTIONS IN ITALY AND RUSSIA.

The Revolutions in Italy and Russia illustrate the same principle. The Italian Revolution inspired by Mazzini and worked out by Garibaldi and Cavour, did not result in the attainment of Swaraj. The freedom of Italy is yet in the making, and the men and women of Italy are to-day looking forward to another revolution. If it results in a war of violence it will again defeat its purpose, but only to allow Freedom and Non-violence to triumph in the end.

The recent revolution in Russia is a very interesting study. The shape which it has now assumed is due to the attempt to force Marxian doctrines and dogmas on the unwilling genius of Russia. Violence will again fail. If I have read the situation accurately I expect a counter revolution. The soul of Russia must struggle to free herself from the socialism of Carl Marx. It may be an independent movement, or it may be that the present movement contains within itself the power of working out that freedom. In the meantime the fate of Russia is trembling in the balance.

### NON-VIOLENT NON-CO-OPERATION THE ONLY METHOD.

I believe in revolutions, but I repeat, violence defeats freedom. The revolution of non-violence is slower but surer. Step by step the soul of the nation emerges and step by step the nation marches on in the path of Swaraj. The only method by which Freedom can be attained in India at any rate, is the method of non-violent non-co-operation. Those who believe this method to be impracticable would do well to ponder over the Akali movement. When I saw the injuries of the wounded at Amritsar and heard from their lips that not one of them had ever wished to meet violence by violence in spite of such great provocation, I said to myself, here was the triumph of non-violence.

Non-violence is not an idle dream. It was not in vain that Mahatma declared "put up thy sword into the sheath". Let those who are "of the truth" hear his voice as those others heard a mightier voice two thousand years ago.

The attempt of the Indian nation to attain Swaraj by this method was, however, met by severe repression. The time has

come for us to estimate our success as well as our failure. So far as repression is concerned, it is easy to answer the question. I have not the least doubt in my mind that the nation has triumphed over the repression which was started and continued to kill the soul of the movement.

#### SUCCESS OF NON-VIOLENT NON-CO-OPERATION.

But the question, which agitates most minds, is as to whether we have succeeded in our work of non-violent non-co-operation. There is, I am sorry to say, a great deal of confusion of thought behind the question. It is assumed that a movement must either succeed or fail, whereas the truth is that human movements, I am speaking of genuine movements, neither altogether succeed nor altogether fail. Every genuine movement proceeds from an ideal, and the ideal is always higher than the achievement. Take the French revolution. Was it a success? Was it a failure? To predict either would be a gross historical blunder. Was the non-co-operation movement in India a success? Yes, a mighty success when we think of the desire for Swaraj which it has succeeded in awakening throughout the length and breadth of this vast country. It is a great success when we think of the practical results of such awakening, in the money which the nation contributed, in the enrolment of members of the Indian National Congress and in the boycott of foreign cloth. I go further and say that the practical achievement also consists of the loss of prestige suffered by Educational Institutions and the Courts of Law and the Reformed Councils throughout the country. If they are still resorted to, it is because of the weakness of our countrymen. The country has already expressed its strong desire to end these institutions. Yet it must be admitted that from another point of view, when we assess the measure of our success in the spirit of arithmetic, we are face to face with "the petty done" and "the undone vast". There is much which remains to be accomplished. Non-violence has to be more firmly established. The work of non-co-operation has to be strengthened, and the field of non-co-operation has to be extended. We must be firm but reasonable. The spirit of sacrifice has got to be further strengthened, and we must proceed with the work of destruction and creation more vigorously than before. I say to our critics, I admit we have failed in many directions, but will you also not admit our success where we have succeeded?

#### CHARGE OF CORRUPTING THE YOUTHS.

• We have been denounced by the Moderates for having corrupted the youth of the country. It has been asserted that we have taught sons to disobey their fathers, the pupils their teachers,

and the subject the Government. We plead guilty to the charge, and we rely upon every spiritual movement as argument in our support. Christ himself was tried for having corrupted the people, and the answer which He gave in anticipation is as emphatic as it is instructive :

" Think not that I am come to send peace on earth : I come not to send peace, but a sword.

" For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

#### CHARGES OF HYPOCRISY.

It has been said that with love on our lips we have been preaching the gospel of hatred. Never was such a vile slander uttered. It may be we have failed to love, it may be we lost ourselves, some of us, in hatred, but that only shows our weakness and imperfectness. Judge us by our ideal, not by what we have achieved. Wherever we have fallen short of that ideal put it down to our weakness. On behalf of the Indian National Congress I deny the charge of hypocrisy. To those who are ever anxious to point out our defects, I say with all humility, " my friends, if we are weak, come and join us and make us stronger. If the leaders are worthless, come and join us to lead, and the leaders will stand aside. If you do not believe in the ideal, what is the use of always criticising us in the light of that ideal ? " We need no critic to tell us how far we have fallen short of that ideal. Evidence of weakness has met me from every direction in which I have looked ; but in spite of our defects of human weakness, of human imperfection, I feel bold enough to say that our victory is assured and that the Bureaucracy knows that our victory is assured.

#### HOW TO APPLY THE METHOD OF NON-VIOLENT NON-CO-OPERATION.

But though the method of non-violent non-co-operation is sure and certain, we have now to consider how best to apply that method to the existing circumstances of the country. I do not agree with those who think that the spirit of the nation is so dead that non-violent non-co-operation is no longer possible. I have given the matter my earnest thought, and I desire to make it perfectly clear that there is absolutely no reason for entertaining any feelings of doubt or despair. The outward appearance of the people to-day is somewhat deceptive. They appear to be in a tired condition and a sense of fatigue has partially overcome them. But beneath all this exterior of quietude, the pulse of the nation beats as strongly as before and as hopefully as at the beginning of this movement. We have to consolidate the strength of the

nation, we have to devise a plan of work which will stimulate their energy so that we can accelerate our journey towards Swaraj. I shall place before you one by one the items of work, which, in my opinion, the Indian National Congress should prescribe for the nation.

#### DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES.

It should commence its work for the year by a clearer declaration of the rights of the different communities in India under the Swaraj Government. So far as the Hindus and the Mahomedans are concerned there should be a clearer and emphatic confirmation of what is known as the Lucknow Compact, and along with that there should be an emphatic recognition of each other's rights, and each should be prepared to undergo some kind of sacrifice in favour of the other. Let me give an instance to make my meaning clear. Every devout Musalman objects to any music in front of a mosque, and every devout and orthodox Hindu objects to cows being slaughtered. May not the Hindus and the Musalmans of India enter into a solemn compact so that there may not be any music before any mosque and that no cows may be slaughtered? Other instances may be quoted. There should be a scheme of a series of sacrifices to be suffered by each community so that they may advance shoulder to shoulder in the path of Swaraj. As regards the other communities such as Sikhs, Christians and Parsees, the Hindus and the Mahomedans who constitute the bulk of the people should be prepared to give them even more than their proportional share in the Swaraj administration. I suggest that the Congress should bring about real agreement between all these communities by which the rights of every minority should be clearly recognized in order to remove all doubts which may arise and all apprehensions which probably exist. I need hardly add that I include among Christians not only pure Indians, but also Anglo-Indians and other people who have chosen to make India their home. Such an agreement as I have indicated was always necessary, but such an agreement is specially necessary in view of the work which faces us to-day.

#### FOREIGN PROPAGANDA.

I further think that the policy of exclusiveness which we have been following during the last two years should now be abandoned. There is in every country a number of people who are selfless followers of liberty and who desire to see every country free. We can no longer afford to lose their sympathy and co-operation. In my opinion, there should be established Congress Agencies in America and in every European country. We must keep ourselves in touch

with world movements and be in constant communication with the lovers of freedom all over the world.

### THE GREAT ASIATIC FEDERATION.

Even more important than this is participation of India in the great Asiatic Federation, which I see in the course of formation. I have hardly any doubt that the Pan-Islamic movement, which was started on a somewhat narrow basis, has given way or is about to give way to the great Federation of all Asiatic people. It is the union of the oppressed nationalities of Asia. Is India to remain outside this union? I admit that our freedom must be won by ourselves but such a bond of friendship and love, of sympathy and co-operation, between India and the rest of Asia, nay, between India and all the liberty-loving people of the world is destined to bring about world peace. World peace to my mind means the freedom of every nationality, and I go further and say that no nation in the face of the earth can be really free when other nations are in bondage. The policy which we have hitherto pursued was absolutely necessary for the concentration of the work which we took upon ourselves to perform, and I agreed to that policy whole-heartedly. The hope of the attainment of Swaraj or a substantial basis of Swaraj in the course of the year made such concentration absolutely necessary. To-day that very work demands broader sympathy and a wider outlook.

### SCHEME OF GOVERNMENT.

It is hardly within the province of this address to deal with any detailed scheme of any such government. I cannot, however, allow this opportunity to pass without giving you an expression of my opinion as to the character of that system of Government. No system of Government which is not for the people and by the people can ever be regarded as the true foundation of Swaraj. I am firmly convinced that a parliamentary Government is not a Government by the people and for the people. Many of us believe that the middle class must win Swaraj for the masses. I do not believe in the possibility of any class movement being ever converted into a movement for Swaraj. If to-day the British Parliament grants provincial autonomy in the provinces with responsibility in the central Government, I for one, will protest against it, because that will inevitably lead to the concentration of power in the hands of the middle class. I do not believe that the middle class will then part with their power. How will it profit India, if in place of the white Bureaucracy that now rules over her, there is substituted an Indian Bureaucracy of the middle classes? Bureaucracy is Bureaucracy, and I believe that the very

idea of Swaraj is inconsistent with the existence of a Bureaucracy. My ideal of Swaraj will never be satisfied unless the people co-operate with us in its attainment. Any other attempt will inevitably lead to what European Socialists call the "bourgeois" Government. In France and in England and in other European countries it is the middle class who fought the battle of freedom and the result is that power is still in the hands of this class. Having usurped the power they are unwilling to part with it. If to-day the whole of Europe is engaged in a battle of real freedom it is because the nations of Europe are gathering their strength to wrest this power from the hands of the middle classes. I desire to avoid the repetition of that chapter of European history. It is for India to show the light to the world,—Swaraj by non-violence and Swaraj by the people.

To me the organization of village life and the practical autonomy of small local centres are more important than either provincial autonomy or central responsibility; and if the choice lay between the two, I would unhesitatingly accept the autonomy of the local centres. I must not be understood as implying that the village centres will be disconnected units. They must be held together by a system of co-operation and integration. For the present, there must be power in the hands of the provincial and the Indian Government; but the ideal should be accepted once for all, that the proper function of the central authority, whether in the Provincial or in the Indian Government is to advise, having a residuary power of control only in case of need, and to be exercised under proper safeguards. I maintain that real Swaraj can only be attained by vesting the power of Government in these local centres, and I suggest that the Congress should appoint a Committee to draw up a scheme of Government which would be acceptable to the nation.

The most advanced thought of Europe is turning from the false individualism on which European culture and institutions are based to what I know to be the ideal of the ancient village organization of India. According to this thought modern democracy of the ballot box and large crowds has failed, but real democracy has not yet been tried. What is the real democracy of modern European thought?

The foundation of real democracy must be laid in small centres—not gradual decentralization which implies a previous centralization—but a gradual integration of the practically autonomous small centres into one living harmonious whole. What is wanted is a human state, not a mechanical contrivance. We want the growth of institutions and organizations which are really dynamic in their nature and not the mere static stability of a centralized state.

This strain of European thought found some expression in the philosophy of Hegel according to whom "human institutions belong to the region, not of inert externality, but of mind and purpose, and are therefore dynamic and self-developing".

Modern European thought has made it clear that from the individual to the "unified state," it is one continuous process of real and natural growth. Sovereignty (Swaraj) is a relative notion. "The individual is sovereign over himself"—attains his Swaraj—"in so far as he can develop, control and unify his manifold nature". From the individual we come to "integrated neighbourhood" which is the real foundation of the unified state which again in its turn gives us the true ideal of the world-state. This integrated neighbourhood is a great deal more than the 'mere physical contiguity of the people who live in the neighbourhood area. It requires the evolution of what has been called "neighbourhood consciousness". In other words, the question is "how can the force generated by the neighbourhood life become part of our whole civic and national life?" It is this question which now democracy takes upon itself to solve.

The process prescribed is the generation of the collective will. The democracy which obtains to-day rests on an attempt at securing a common will by a process of addition. This really means a war of wills, the issue being left to be decided by a mere superiority of numbers. New democracy discountenances this process of addition, and insists on the discovery of detailed means and methods by which the different wills of a neighbourhood entity may *grow* into one common collective will. This process is not a process of addition but of integration, and the consciousness of the neighbourhood thus awakened must express the common collective will of that neighbourhood entity. The collective wills of the several neighbourhood centres must, by a similar process of integration, be allowed to evolve the common collective will of the whole nation. It is only thus, by a similar process of integration that any league of nations may be real and the vision of a world state may be realized.

The whole of this philosophy is based on the idea of the evolution of the individual. The idea is to "release the powers of the individual". Ordinary notions of state have little to do with true individualism, *i.e.*, "with the individual as consciously responsible for the life from which he draws his breath and to which he contributes his all". According to this school of thought "representative government, party organization, majority rule, with all their excrescences are dead wood. In their stead must appear the organization of non-partisan groups for the begetting, the bringing into being, of common ideas, a common purpose and the collective will". This means the true development and extension

of the individual self. The institutions that exist to-day have made machines of men. No Government will be successful, no true Government is possible which does not rest on the individual. "Up to the present moment," says the gifted authoress of the *New State*, "we have never seen the individual yet. The search for him has been the whole long striving of our Anglo-Saxon history. We sought him through the method of representation and failed to find him. We sought to reach him by extending the suffrage to every man and then to every woman and yet he eludes us. Direct Government now seeks the individual." In another place the same writer says: "The group organization releases us from the domination of mere numbers, thus democracy transcends time and space. It can never be understood except as a spiritual force. Majority rule rests on numbers; democracy rests on the well-grounded assumption that society is not a collection of units, but a network of human relations. Democracy is not worked out at the polling booth; it is the bringing forth of a genuine collective will, one to which every single being must contribute the whole of his complex life, as one which every single being must express the whole of at one point. Thus the essence of democracy is creating. The technique of democracy is group organization." According to this school of thought no living state is possible without the development and the extension of the individual self. State itself is no static unit. Nor is it an arbitrary creation. "It is a process; a continual self-modification to express its different stages of growth in which each and all must be so flexible that continual change of form is twin-fellow of continual growth." This can only be realized when there is a clear perception that individuals and groups and the nation stand in no antithesis. The integration of all these into one conscious whole means and must necessarily mean the integration of the wills of individuals into the common and collective will of the entire nation.

The general trend of European thought has not accepted the ideal of this new democracy. But the present problems which are agitating Europe seem to offer no other solution. I have very little doubt that this ideal which appears to many practical politicians as impracticable will be accepted as the real ideal at no distant future. "There is little yet," I again quote from the same author; "that is practical in practical politics."

The fact is that all the progressive movements in Europe have suffered because of the want of a really spiritual basis and it is refreshing to find that this writer has seized upon it. To those who think that the neighbourhood group is too puny to serve as a real foundation of self-government, she says, "is our daily life profane and only so far as we rise out of it do we approach the



sacred life ? Then no wonder politics are what they have become. But this is not the creed of men to-day ; we believe in the sacredness of our life ; we believe that divinity is forever incarnating in humanity, and so we believe in Humanity and the common daily life of all men ”.

There is thus a great deal of correspondence between this view of life and the view which I have been endeavouring to place before my countrymen for the last fifteen years. For the truth of all truths is that the outer *Leela* of God reveals itself in history. Individual, Society, Nation, Humanity are the different aspects of that very *Leela* and no scheme of Self-Government which is practically true and which is really practical can be based on any other philosophy of life. It is the realization of this truth which is the supreme necessity of the hour. This is the soul of Indian thought, and this is the ideal towards which the recent thought of Europe is slowly but surely advancing.

To frame such a scheme of Government regard must, therefore, be had :—

- (1) to the formation of local centres more or less on the lines of the ancient village system of India ;
- (2) the growth of larger and larger groups out of the integration of these village centres ;
- (3) the unifying state which should be the result of similar growth.
- (4) the village centres and the larger groups must be practically autonomous.
- (5) the residuary power of control must remain in the central Government but the exercise of such power should be exceptional and for that purpose proper safeguards should be provided, so that the practical autonomy of the local centres may be maintained and at the same time the growth of the central Government into a really unifying state may be possible. The ordinary work of such central Government should be mainly advisory.

As a necessary corollary to what I have ventured to suggest as the form of Government which we should accept, I think that the work of organizing these local centres should be forthwith commenced. The modern subdivisions or even smaller units may be conveniently taken as the local centres, and larger centres may be conveniently formed. Once we have our local areas—“ the neighbourhood group ”—we should foster the habit of corporate thinking, and leave all local problems to be worked out

by them. There is no reason why we should not start the Government by these local centres to-day. They would depend for their authority on the voluntary co-operation of the people, and voluntary co-operation is much better than the compulsory co-operation which is at the bottom of the bureaucratic rule in India. This is not the place to elaborate the scheme which I have in mind; but I think that it is essentially necessary to appoint a Committee with power, not only to draw up a scheme of Government but to suggest means by which the scheme can be put into operation at once.

### BOYCOTT OF COUNCILS.

The next item of work to which I desire to refer is the boycott of Councils. Unhappily the question has become part of the controversy of Change or No-Change. To my mind the whole controversy proceeds on a somewhat erroneous assumption. The question is not so much as to whether there should be a change in the programme of the work; the real question is, whether it is not necessary now to change the direction of our activities in certain respects for the success of the very movement which we hold so dear. Let me illustrate what I mean. Take the Bardoli Resolution. In the matter of boycott of schools and colleges the Bardoli Resolution alters the direction of our activity, which does not in any way involve the abandonment of the boycott. During the Swaraj year the idea was to bring the students out of Government schools and colleges, and if National schools were started they were regarded as concessions to the "weakness" of these students. The idea was, to quote the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "political" and not "educational". Under the Bardoli Resolution, however, it is the establishment of schools and colleges which must be the main activity of national education. The idea is "educational", and if it still be the desire of the Congress to bring students out of Government schools and colleges, it is by offering them educational advantages. Here the boycott of schools and colleges is still upheld, but the direction of our activities is changed. In fact, such changes must occur in every revolution, violent or non-violent, as it is only by such changes that the ideal is truly served.

In the next place we must keep in view the fact that according to the unanimous opinion of the members of the Enquiry Committee, Civil Disobedience on a large scale is out of the question because the people are not prepared for it.

I confess that I am not in favour of the restrictions which have been put upon the practical adoption of any system of civil disobedience, and in my opinion the Congress should abolish those restrictions. I have not yet been able to understand why

to enable a people to civilly disobey particular laws, it should be necessary that at least eighty per cent of them should be clad in pure "khadi". I am not much in favour of general mass civil disobedience. To my mind, the idea is impracticable. But the disobedience of particular laws which are eminently unlawful, laws which are the creatures of "Law and Order," laws which are alike an outrage on humanity and an insult to God—disobedience of such laws is within the range of practical politics and in my opinion every attempt should be made to offer disobedience to such laws. It is only by standing on truth that the cause of Swaraj may prevail. When we submit to such laws, we abandon the plank of truth. What hope is there for a nation so dead to the sense of truth as not to rebel against lawless laws, against regulations which insure their national being and hamper their national development?

I am of opinion that the question of the boycott of the Council which is agitating the country so much must be considered and decided in the light of the circumstances I have just mentioned. There is no opposition in idea between such civil disobedience as I have mentioned and the entry into the Councils for the purpose, and with the avowed object of either ending or mending them. I am not against the boycott of Councils. I am simply of opinion that the system of the Reformed Councils with their steel frame of the Indian Civil Service covered over by a dyarchy of deadlocks and departments, is absolutely unsuitable to the nature and genius of the Indian nation. It is an attempt of the British Parliament to force a foreign system upon the Indian people. India has unhesitatingly refused to recognize this foreign system as a real foundation for Swaraj. With me, as I have often said, it is not a question of more or less; I am always prepared to sacrifice much for a real basis of Swaraj, nor do I attach any importance to the question as to whether the attainment of full and complete independence will be a matter of seven years or ten years or twenty years. A few years is nothing in the life history of a nation. But I maintain that India cannot accept a system such as this as a foundation of our Swaraj. These Councils must therefore be either mended or ended. Hitherto we have been boycotting the Councils from outside. We have succeeded in doing much—the prestige of the Councils is diminished, and the country knows that the people who adorn those chambers are not the true representatives of the people. But though we have succeeded in doing much, these Councils are still there. It should be the duty of the Congress to boycott the Councils more effectively from within. Reformed Councils are really a mask which the Bureaucracy has put on. I conceive it to be our clear duty to tear this mask from off their face. The very idea of boycott implies, to

my mind, something more than mere withdrawal. The boycott of foreign goods means that such steps must be taken that there may be no foreign goods in our markets. The boycott of the Reformed Councils, to my mind, means that such steps must be taken that these Councils may not be there to impede the progress of Swaraj. The only successful boycott of these Councils is either to mend them in a manner suitable to the attainment of Swaraj or to end them completely. That is the way in which I advise the nation to boycott the Councils.

A great deal of discussion has taken place in the country as to whether the boycott of Councils in the sense in which I mean it, is within the principle of non-violent non-co-operation. I am emphatically of opinion that it does not offend against any principle of non-co-operation which has been adopted and applied by the Indian National Congress. I am not dealing with logical or philosophical abstractions. I am only dealing with that which Congress has adopted and called non-co-operation. In the first place, may I point out that we have not up to now non-co-operated with the Bureaucracy? We have been merely preparing the people of this country to offer non-co-operation. Let me quote the Nagpur resolution on non-co-operation in support of my proposition. I am quoting only the portions which are relevant to this point :

“Whereas in the opinion of the Congress the existing Government of India had forfeited the confidence of the country, and, whereas the people of India are now determined to establish Swaraj . . . now this Congress . . . declare that the entire or any part or parts of the scheme of non-violent non-co-operation with the renunciation of voluntary association with the present Government at one end, and the refusal to pay taxes at the other, should be put into force at a time to be determined by either the Indian National Congress, or the All India Congress Committee and that, *in the meanwhile, to prepare the country for it, effective steps should continue to be taken in that behalf.*”

Then follows the effective steps such as, national education, boycott of law courts, boycott of foreign goods, etc., which must be taken ‘in the meanwhile’. It is clear therefore that the Congress has not yet advocated the application of non-co-operation but has merely recommended certain steps to be taken, so that, at some time or other, to be determined by the Congress, the Indian nation may offer non-co-operation. In the second place, let us judge of the character of this principle, not by thinking of any logical idea or philosophical abstraction, but by gathering the principle from the work and the activity which the Congress has enjoined. When I survey that work, it is clear to my mind that the Congress was engaged in a twofold activity. In everything

that the Congress commanded there is an aspect of destruction as there is an aspect of creation. The boycott of lawyers and law courts means the destruction of existing legal institutions ; and the formation of Panchayates means the creation of agencies through which justice may be administered. The boycott of schools and colleges means the destruction of the department of education ; 'and the establishment of National schools and colleges means the creation of educational institutions for the youth of India. The boycott of foreign goods followed as it was by the burning of foreign cloth means the destruction of the foreign goods already in the country and the preventing, in the future, of foreign goods coming into the country. But on the other hand, the spinning wheel and the looms means creative activity in supplying the people with indigenous cloth. Judged by this principle, what is wrong about the desire either to convert the Councils into institutions which may lead us to Swaraj, or to destroy them altogether ? The same twofold aspect of creation and destruction is to be found in the boycott of Councils in the way I want them to be boycotted.

It has also been suggested that it offends against the morality and spirituality of this movement. Let us take the two points separately. As regards the question of morality apart from the ethics of non-co-operation, it has been urged that entering the Councils for the purpose of ending the Councils is unfair and dishonest. The argument implies that the Reformed Councils belong entirely to the Bureaucracy and the idea is that we should not enter into other people's property with a view to injure it. To my mind, the argument is based on a misconception of facts. Inadequate as the Reforms undoubtedly are, I do not for a moment admit that the Reforms Act was a gift of the British Parliament. It was, to quote the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "a concession to popular agitation". The fact is that it is the resultant of two contending forces, the desire of the people for freedom and the desire of the bureaucracy to oppose such desire. The result is that it has travelled along lines neither entirely popular nor entirely bureaucratic. The people of India do not like these reforms, but let us not forget that bureaucracy does not like them either. Because it is the result of two contending forces pulling in different directions, the Reforms have assumed a tortured shape. But so far as the rights recognised are concerned, they are our rights—our property—and there is nothing immoral or unfair or dishonest in making use of the rights which the people have extorted from the British Parliament. If the fulfilment of the very forces which have succeeded in securing the reforms require that the Councils should either be ended or mended, if the struggle for freedom compels the adoption of either course,

what possible charge of immorality can be levelled against it? I admit if we had proposed to enter the Councils stealthily with the avowed object of co-operation but keeping within our hearts the desire to break the Councils, such a course would undoubtedly have been dishonest. European diplomacy, let us hope, has been abolished by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. If we play now, we play with all our cards on the table.

But some people say that it is immoral from the point of view of non-co-operation, because it involves an idea of destruction. The work of non-co-operation according to these patriots—I have the highest reverence for them—is only to build our national life, ignoring altogether the existence of the bureaucracy. It may be an honest ideal, and logically speaking, it may be the inner meaning of non-co-operation. But the non-co-operation which the Congress has followed is not so logical and I claim that if the principle of non-co-operation is to be advanced as a test of my programme, let it be the same principle which the Congress has accepted, adopted and applied. As I have already said, that principle countenances destruction as well as creation. As a matter of fact, circumstanced as we are, with the bureaucracy to the right and the bureaucracy to the left, bureaucracy all around us, it is impossible to create without destroying; nor must it be forgotten that if we break, it is only that we may build.

It has also been suggested that the very entry into the Councils is inconsistent with the ideal of non-co-operation. I confess I do not understand the argument. Supposing the Congress had sanctioned an armed insurrection, could it be argued that entry into the fort of the bureaucracy is inconsistent with the principle of non-co-operation? Surely the charge of inconsistency must depend on the object of the entry. An advancing army does not co-operate with the enemy when it marches into the enemy's territory. Co-operation or non-co-operation must therefore depend on the object with which such entry is made. The argument, if analysed, comes to this that whenever the phrase "entry into Councils" is used it calls up the association of co-operation and then the mere idea of this entry is proclaimed to be inconsistent with non-co-operation. But this is the familiar logical fallacy of four terms. Entry into the Councils to co-operate with the Government and entry into the Councils to non-co-operate with the Government are two terms and two different propositions. The former is inconsistent with the idea of non-co-operation, the latter is absolutely consistent with that very idea.

Next let us understand the opposition from the point of view of the spirituality of our movement. The question of spirituality

is not to be confused with the dictates of any particular religion. I am not aware of the injunctions of any religion against entering the Councils with a view either to mend them or end them. I have heard from many Mahomedans that the Koran lays down no such injunction. Other Mahomedan friends have told me that there may be some difficulty on that ground, but that is a matter with regard to which I am not competent to speak. The Khilafat must answer that question with such assistance as they may obtain from the Ulemas. It is needless to point out that should the Ulemas come to the conclusion that under the present circumstances it would be an offence against their religion to enter the Councils, the Congress should unhesitatingly accept their decision, because no work in this country towards the attainment of Swaraj is possible without the hearty co-operation of both Hindus and Mussalmans. But I am dealing with that spirituality which does not affect any particular creed or any particular religion. Judged from the standpoint of such spirituality what objection can there be in removing from our path by all legitimate means any obstacle to the attainment of Swaraj? We burned foreign cloth without a scruple, and the spirituality of the movement did not receive a shock when we burned it. It is as well to start with a clear conception as to what that spirituality is. Apart from any credal or doctrinal injunction and apart from any question of morality the basis of spirituality must be the attainment of freedom and of Swaraj. What is the duty which every human being owes not only to his race, not only to his nation, not only to humanity, but also to his God? It is the right to fulfil oneself. It is the duty of living in the light of God. Shortly after my release from imprisonment I said in a public speech that all our national activities should be based on truth. Ever since that day questions and conundrums have been put to me. I have been asked to define what is truth. It has also been suggested that because I dared not tell the truth that I took refuge under the general expression. I still insist that our national activities must be based on truth. I repeat that I do not believe in politics, or in making water-tight compartments of our national life which is an indivisible organic whole. I repeat that as you cannot define life, you cannot define truth. The test of truth is not logical definition. The test of truth lies in its all-compelling force in making itself felt. You know truth when you have felt it. God cannot be defined, nor can truth, because truth is the revelation of God. Two thousand years ago, a jesting judge asked the same question of the Son of God. He made no answer by word of mouth; but he sacrificed himself and Truth was revealed. When I speak of spirituality I speak of the same truth. I look upon history as the revelation of God. I

look upon human individual personality, nationality and humanity each contributing to the life of the other as the revelation of God to man. I look upon the attainment of freedom and Swaraj as the only way of fulfilling oneself as individuals, as nations. I look upon all national activities as the real foundation of the service of that greater humanity which again is the revelation of God to man. The Son of God brought to the world not peace but a sword—not the peace of death and immorality and corruption but the “ separating sword ” of Truth. We have to fight against all corruptions and all immorality. It is only thus that freedom can be attained. Whatever obstacles there may be in the path of Swaraj either of the individual or of the nation, or humanity at large, these obstacles must be removed by the individual if he desires his freedom, by the nation if that nation desires to fulfil itself, by all the nations of the world if the cause of humanity is to prosper. That being the spirituality of the movement as I understand it I am prepared to put away all obstacles that lie between that Indian nation and the attainment of its freedom, not stealthily but openly, reverently in the name of truth and God. Judged from this ideal of spirituality the entry into the Councils for the purpose I have stated is necessary to advance the cause of truth. Everything in connection with the controversy must be judged by that standard.

At present the question before the country put by those members of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee who are in favour of Council entry is simply that the members of the Congress should stand as candidates. It is unnecessary, therefore, to go into other questions raised, such as in the matter of taking oath, the probability or otherwise of securing a majority and so on. With regard to the question of oath all that I need say at present is this, that apart from the dictates of any particular religion which I do not propose to deal with, the question does not present any difficulty at all. The oath is a constitutional one. The king stands for the constitution. Great changes in the constitution have taken place in England under that very oath. Now, what is the oath? It binds those who take it,—first not to make any use of powers which are not allowed by the Reforms Act; secondly to discharge their duties faithfully. So far as the first point is concerned, there is nothing in my suggestion which militates against it. So far as the second point is concerned, I am aware that a forced interpretation has been sought to be put upon it, namely, that a member taking the oath is bound to discharge his duties faithfully to the bureaucracy. All that I need say is, that there is no constitutional authority of any kind to justify that interpretation. To my mind the words mean a faithful discharge of a member's duties to his constituency by



the exercise of powers recognized under the Reforms Act. I do not therefore understand what possible objection there may be to take the oath. But there again the question does not arise at present.

Various other questions have been asked as to whether it is possible to secure a majority and as to what we should do supposing we were in a majority. I think it possible that having regard to the present circumstances of the country, the Non-co-operators are likely to get the majority. I am aware of the difficulty of the franchise, I am aware of the rules which prevent many of us from entering the Councils; but making every allowance for all these difficulties, I believe that we shall be in the majority. But here also the question doesn't arise till we meet in the Congress of 1923 when the matter may be discussed not on suppositions but on actualities.

As regards the question as to what we should do if we have the majority, the answer is clear. We should begin our proceedings by a solemn declaration of the existence of our inherent right, and by a formal demand for a constitution which would recognize and conserve those rights and give effect to our claims for the particular system of government which we may choose for ourselves. If our demands are accepted, then the fight is over. But, as I have often said, if it is conceded that we are entitled to have that form of Government which we may choose for ourselves, and the real beginning is made with that particular form of Government in view, then it matters nothing to me whether the complete surrender of power is made to us to-day, or in five years or even in twenty years. If, however, our demand is not given effect to, we must non-co-operate with the bureaucracy by opposing each and every work of the Council. We must disallow the entire Budget. We must move the adjournment of the House on every possible occasion; and defeat every Bill that may be introduced. In fact we must so proceed that the Council will refuse to do any work unless and until our demands are satisfied. I am aware of the large powers of certification which Governors can exercise under the Reforms Act. But Government by certification is just as impossible as Government by veto. Such procedure may be adopted on a few occasions. The time must soon come when the bureaucracy must yield or withdraw the Reforms Act. In either case it is a distinct triumph for the nation, and either course if adopted by the bureaucracy will bring us nearer to the realization of our ideal.

Another question is often asked: suppose we end these Reformed Councils—what then? Could not the same question be asked with regard to every step the Congress has hitherto undertaken in the way of breaking, or destroying institutions.

If we had succeeded in destroying the Educational Department, might not somebody ask—what then? If we had succeeded in destroying the legal institutions, might not the question be put with equal relevance? The fact is, destruction itself will never bring us Swaraj. The fact further is that no construction is possible without destruction. We must not forget that it is not this activity or that activity which by itself can bring Swaraj. It is the totality of our national activity in the way of destruction and in the way of creation, that will bring Swaraj. If we succeed in demolishing these Reformed Councils you will find the whole nation astir with life. Let them put other obstacles in our way; we shall remove them with added strength and greater vitality.

It has also been suggested that the bureaucracy will never allow the non-co-operators to enter the Councils—they will alter the rules to prevent such entry. I cannot conceive of anything better calculated to strengthen the cause of non-co-operation than this. If any such rule is framed I should welcome it and again change the direction of our activity. The infant nation in India requires constant struggle for its growth and development. We must not forget that a great non-violent revolution is on the land, and we shall change the direction of our activities as often as circumstances require it. To-day the Councils are open and we must attack them—to-morrow, if the Councils are closed, we must be prepared to deal with the contingency when it arises. What do we do when it pours with rain? We turn our umbrellas in the direction from which the water comes. It is in the same way that we must turn the direction of our activities whenever the fulfilment of our national life demands it.

The work of the Councils for the last two years has made it necessary for non-co-operators to enter the Councils. The bureaucracy has received added strength from these Reformed Councils, and those who have entered the Councils, speaking generally, have practically helped the cause of Bureaucracy.

I warn my countrymen against the policy of allowing these Reformed Councils to work their wicked will. There will undoubtedly be a further increase of taxation and there is an apprehension in my mind, I desire to express it with all the emphasis that I can command, that if we allow this policy to drift to continue the result will be that we shall lose the people who are with us to-day. Let us break the Councils if the bureaucracy does not concede to the demands of the people. If there is fresh taxation, as there is bound to be, let the responsibility be on the bureaucracy. Then you and I and the people will jointly fight the powers that be.

## LABOUR ORGANIZATION.

I am further of opinion that the Congress should take up the work of Labour and Peasant organization. With regard to labour there is a resolution of the Waggur Congress, but I am sorry to say that it has not been acted upon. There is an apprehension in the minds of some non-co-operators that the cause of non-co-operation will suffer if we exploit Labour for Congress purposes. I confess again I do not understand the argument. The word "exploitation" has got an ugly association, and the argument assumes that Labour and Peasants are not with us in this struggle of Swaraj. I deny the assumption. My experience has convinced me that Labour and the Peasantry of India to-day are, if anything, more eager to attain Swaraj than the so-called middle and educated classes. If we are "exploiting" boys of tender years and students of colleges, if we are "exploiting" the women of India, if we are "exploiting" the whole of the middle classes irrespective of their creed and caste and occupation, may I ask what justification is there for leaving out Labourers and Peasants? I suppose the answer is that they are welcome to be the members of the Congress Committees but that there should not be a separate organization of them. But Labour has got a separate interest and they are often oppressed by foreign capitalists, and the Peasantry of India is often oppressed by a class of man who are the standard-bearers of the bureaucracy. Is the service of this special interest in any way antagonistic to the service of nationalism? To find bread for the poor, to secure justice to a class of people who are engaged in a particular trade or avocation—how is that work any different from the work of attaining Swaraj? Anything which strengthens the national cause, anything which supports the masses of India is surely as much a matter of Swaraj as any other items of work which the Congress has in hand. My advice is that the Congress should lose no time in appointing a Committee, a strong workable Committee, to organize Labour and the Peasantry of India. We have delayed the matter already too long. If the Congress fails to do its duty, you may expect to find organizations set up in the country by Labourers and Peasants detached from you, disassociated from the cause of Swaraj, which will eventually bring within the arena of the peaceful revolution class struggles and the war of special interests. If the object of the Congress be to avoid that disgraceful issue let us take Labour and Peasantry in hand, and let us organize them both from the point of view of their own special interest and also from the point of view of the higher ideal which demands the satisfaction of their special interests and the devotion of such interest to the cause of Swaraj. Here again we have to make use of the very selfishness of Labourers and Peasants,

as we know that the fulfilment of that very selfishness requires its just and proper contribution to the life of the nation.

#### WORK ALREADY TAKEN UP.

I now turn to the work which the Congress has already taken up. I may at once point out that it is not my desire that any work which the Congress has taken up should be surrendered. The change of direction which I advocate and the other practical change which I have mentioned is not by way of surrendering anything that is already on the plank—but it is simply by way of addition.

#### HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY.

With regard to the questions of Hindu-Muslim unity, untouchability and such matters, I agree with the recommendation of the Enquiry Committee. I desire to point out, however, that true unity of all sections of the Indian nation can only be based on a proper co-operation and the recognition by each section of the rights of the others—that is why I propose that there should be a compact between the different sections, between different communities of India. We will do little good to the section known as Untouchables if we approach them in a spirit of superiority. We must engage them in the work before us, and we must work with them side by side and shoulder to shoulder.

#### KHADDAR.

I now come to the question of Khaddar which I regard as one of the most important questions before us. As I have already said, I am opposed to the manufacture of Khaddar on a commercial basis. I said among other things when I seconded the Bezwada resolution on the 31st of March, 1921, proposed by Mahatma Gandhi :

“ Our reason in asking the people to take to the Charkha was not based upon any desire to enter into any competition with foreign capitalist production either from without or from within. Our idea is to enable the people to understand and fashion for themselves their economic life and utilize the spare time of their families and opportunities with a view to create more economic goods for themselves and improve their own conditions.” The idea is to make the people of this country self-reliant and self-contained. This work is difficult but essential and should be carried on with all our strength. I would much rather that a few families were self-contained than factories were started on a large scale. Such factories represent a short-sighted policy, and there is no doubt that though it would satisfy the present need it will

create an evil which it would be difficult to eradicate. I am naturally opposed to the creation of a new Manchester in India of which we have had sufficient experience. Let us avoid that possibility, if we can.

It is often stated that Khaddar alone will bring us *Ṣwaraj*. I ask my countrymen in what way is it possible for Khaddar to lead us to *Swaraj*? It is in one sense only that the statement may be true. We must regard Khaddar as the symbol of *Swaraj*. As the Khaddar makes us self-contained with regard to a very large department of our national life so it is hoped that the inspiration of Khaddar will make the whole of our national life self-contained and independent. That is the meaning of the symbol. To my mind such symbol worship requires the spreading out of all non-co-operation activities in every possible direction. It is thus and only thus that the speedy attainment of *Swaraj* is possible.

#### CONCLUSION.

It remains to me to deliver to you a last message of hope and confidence. There is no royal road to freedom, and dark and difficult will be the path leading to it. But dauntless is your courage, and firm your resolution; and though there will be reverses, sometimes severe reverses, they will only have the effect of speeding your emancipation from the bondage of a foreign government. Do not make the mistake of confusing achievement with success. Achievement is an appearance, and appearances are often deceptive. I contend that, though we cannot point to a great deal as the solid achievement of the movement, the success of it is assured. That success was proclaimed by the bureaucracy in the repeated attempts which were made, and are still being made, to crush the growth of the movement, and to arrest its progress, in the refusal to repeal some of the most obnoxious of the repressive legislations, in the frequent use that has been made of the arbitrary or discretionary authority that is vested in the executive government, and in sending to prison our beloved leader who offered himself as a sacrifice to the wrath of the bureaucracy. But though the ultimate success of the movement is assured, I warn you that the issue depends wholly on you, and on how you conduct yourself in meeting the forces that are arrayed against you. Christianity rose triumphant when Jesus of Nazareth offered himself as a sacrifice to the excessive worship of law and order by the Scribes and the Pharisees. The forces that are arrayed against you are the forces, not only of Bureaucracy, but of the modern Scribes and Pharisees whose interest it is to maintain the Bureaucracy in all its pristine glory. Be it yours to offer yourselves as sacrifices in the

interests of truth and justice, so that your children and your children's children may have the fruit of your sufferings. Be it yours to wage a spiritual warfare so that the victory, when it comes, does not debase you, nor tempt you to retain the power of government in your own hands. But if yours is to be a spiritual warfare, your weapons must be those of the spiritual soldier. Anger is not for you, hatred is not for you ; nor for you is pettiness, meanness or falsehood. For you is the hope of dawn and the confidence of the morning, and for you is the song that was sung of Titan, chained and imprisoned, but the Champion of Man, in the Greek fable :

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite ;  
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night ;  
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent ;  
To love, and bear ; to hope till Hope creates  
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates ;  
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent ;  
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be  
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free ;  
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory.

BANDE MATARAM.

## APPENDIX E.

The following is the memorandum which was submitted in October, 1916, to H.E. the Viceroy by nineteen elected additional members of the Imperial Legislative Council with regard to post-war reforms :—

There is no doubt that the termination of the war will see a great advance in the ideals of government all over the civilized world and especially in the British Empire, which entered into the struggle in defence of the liberties of weak and small nationalities and is pouring forth its richest blood and treasure in upholding the cause of justice and humanity in the international relations of the world. India has borne her part in this struggle and cannot remain unaffected by the new spirit of change for a better state of things. Expectations have been raised in this country and hopes held out that, after the war, the problems of Indian administration will be looked at from a new angle of vision. The people of India have good reasons to be grateful to England for the great progress in her material resources and the widening of her intellectual and political outlook under British rule, and for the steady if slow advance in her national life, commencing with the Charter Act of India of 1833. Up to 1909, the Government of India was conducted by a bureaucracy almost entirely non-Indian in its composition and not responsible to the people of India. The reforms of 1909 for the first time introduced an Indian element in the direction of affairs in the administration of India. This element was of a very limited character. The Indian people accepted it as an indication on the part of the Government of a desire to admit the Indians into the inner counsels of the Indian Empire. So far as the Legislative Councils are concerned, the number of non-official members were merely enlarged with increased facilities for debate and interpellation. The Supreme Legislative Council retained an absolute official majority, and in the Provincial Legislative Councils, where a non-official majority was allowed, such majority included nominated members and the European representatives. In measures largely affecting the people, whether of legislation or taxation, by which Europeans were not directly affected, the European members would naturally support the Government and the nominated members, being nominees of Government, would be inclined to take the same side.

Past experience has shown that this has actually happened on various occasions. The non-official majorities, therefore, in the Provincial Councils have proved largely illusory and give no real power to the representatives of the people. The Legislative Councils, whether Supreme or Provincial, are at present nothing but advisory bodies, without any power of effective control over the Government, Imperial or Provincial. The people or their representatives are practically as little associated with the real government of the country as they were before the reforms, except for the introduction of the Indian element in the Executive Councils, where again the nomination rests entirely with the Government, the people having no voice in the selection of the Indian members.

The object which the Government had in view in introducing the reforms of 1909 was, as expressed by the Prime Minister in his speech in the House of Commons on the second reading of the Indian Councils Bill (1st April 1909), that "it was most desirable in the circumstances to give to the people of India the feeling that these Legislative Councils are not mere automatons, the wires of which are pulled by the official hierarchy." This object, it is submitted, has not been attained. Apart from this question of the constitution of the Legislative and Executive Councils, the people labour under certain grave disabilities, which not only prevent the utilization, but also lead to the wastage, of what is best in them, and are positively derogatory to their sense of national self-respect. The Arms Act, which excludes from its operations Europeans and Anglo-Indians and applies only to the pure natives of the country, the disqualification of Indians for forming or joining Volunteer corps, and their exclusion from the commissioned ranks of the army, are disabilities which are looked upon with an irritating sense of racial differentiation. It would be bad enough if these were mere disabilities. Restrictions and prohibitions regarding the possession and use of arms have tended to emasculate the civil population in India and expose them to serious danger. The position of Indians in India is practically this, that they have no real part or share in the direction of the government of the country, and are placed under very great and galling disabilities from which the other members of the British Empire are exempt, and which have reduced them to a state of utter helplessness. The existence, moreover, of the system of indentured emigration gives to the British Colonies and the outside world the impression that Indians, as a whole, are no better than indentured coolies, who are looked upon as very little, if at all, above the slave. The present state of things makes the Indians feel that, though theoretically they are the equal subjects of the King, they hold a very inferior position



in the British Empire. Other Asiatic races also hold the same, if not a worse, view about India and her status in the Empire. Humiliating as this position of inferiority is to the Indian mind, it is almost unbearable to the youth of India, whose outlook is broadened by education and travel in foreign parts where they come in contact with the other free races. In the face of these grievances and disabilities, what has sustained the people is the hope and faith inspired by promises and assurances of fair and equal treatment which have been held out from time to time by our Sovereigns and British statesmen of high standing. In the crisis we are now going through, the Indian people have sunk domestic differences between themselves and the Government and have faithfully and loyally stood by the Empire. The Indian soldiers were eager to go to the battlefields of Europe, not as mercenary troops but as free citizens of the British Empire which required their services, and her civilian population was animated by one desire, namely, to stand by England in the hour of her need. Peace and tranquillity reigned throughout India when she was practically denuded of British and Indian troops. The Prime Minister of England, while voicing the sentiments of the English people in regard to India's part in this great war, spoke of Indians as "the joint and equal custodians of one common interest and future." India does not claim any reward for her loyalty, but she has a right to expect that the want of confidence on the part of Government, to which she not unnaturally ascribes her present state, should now be a thing of the past and that she should no longer occupy a position of subordination but one of comradeship. This would assure the Indian people that England is ready and willing to help them to attain self-government under the aegis of the British Crown, and thus discharge the noble mission which she has undertaken and to which she has so often given voluntary expression through her rulers and statesmen. What is wanted is not merely good government or efficient administration, but government that is acceptable to the people because it is responsible to them. This is what, India understands, would constitute the changed angle of vision.

If, after the termination of the war, the position of India practically remains what it was before and there is no material change in it, it will undoubtedly cause bitter disappointment and great discontent in the country, and the beneficent effects of participation in common danger, overcome by common effort, will soon disappear, leaving no record behind save the painful memory of unrealized expectations. We feel sure that the Government is also alive to the situation and is contemplating measures of reform in the administration of the country. We feel that we should avail ourselves of this opportunity to

respectfully offer to Government our humble suggestions as to the lines on which these reforms should proceed. They must in our opinion go to the root of the matter. They must give to the people real and effective participation in the government of the country, and also remove those irritating disabilities as regards the possession of arms and a military career, which indicates want of confidence in the people and place them in a position of inferiority and helplessness. With this view, we would take the liberty to suggest the following measures for consideration and adoption :—

1. In all the Executive Councils, Provincial and Imperial, half the number of members should be Indians ; the European element in the Executive Councils should, as far as possible, be nominated from the ranks of men trained and educated in the public life of England, so that India may have the benefit of a wider outlook and larger experience of the outside world. It is not absolutely essential that the members of the Executive Councils, Indians or Europeans, should have experience of actual administration, for, as in the case of ministers in England, the assistance of the permanent officials of the departments is always available to them. As regards Indians, we venture to say that a sufficient number of qualified Indians, who can worthily fill the office of members of the Executive Council and hold portfolios is always available. Our short experience in this direction has shown how Indians like Sir S. P. Sinha, Sir Syed Ali Imam, the late Mr. Krishnaswami Iyer, Sir Shams-ul-Huda and Sir Sankaran Nair have maintained a high level of administrative ability in the discharge of their duties. Moreover, it is well known that the Native States, where Indians have opportunities, have produced renowned administrators like Sir Salar Jang, Sir T. Madhava Rao, Sir Sheshadri Ayer, Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao, not to mention the present administrators in the various Native States of India. The statutory obligations, now existing, that three of the members of the supreme Executive Council shall be elected from the public services in India and similar provisions with regard to Provincial Councils should be removed. The elected representatives of the people should have a voice in the selection of the Indian members of the Executive Councils and for that purpose a principle of election should be adopted.

2. All the Legislative Councils in India should have a substantial majority of elected representatives. These representatives, we feel sure, will watch and safeguard the interests of the masses and the agricultural population with whom they are in closer touch than any European officer, however sympathetic, can possibly be. The proceedings of the various Legislative Councils and the Indian National Congress and the Moslem League bear ample testimony

to the solicitude of the educated Indians for the welfare of the masses and their acquaintance with their wants and wishes. The franchise should be broadened and extended directly to the people, Mahomedans or Hindus, wherever they are in a minority, being given proper and adequate representation having regard to their numerical strength and position.

3. The total number of the members of the Supreme Council should not be less than 150, and of the Provincial Councils not less than 100 for the major provinces, and not less than sixty to seventy-five for the minor provinces.

4. The Budget should be passed in the shape of money bills, fiscal autonomy being conceded to India.

5. The Imperial Legislative Council should have power to legislate on, and discuss and pass resolutions relating to, all matters of Indian administration, and the Provincial Councils should have similar powers with regard to Provincial administrations, save and except that the direction of military affairs, of foreign relations, declarations of war, the making of peace, and the entering into treaties, other than commercial, should be vested in the Government of India. As a safeguard the Governor-General-in-Council or the Governor-in-Council, as the case may be, should have the right of veto which, however, should be exercised subject to certain conditions and limitations.

6. The Council of the Secretary of State should be abolished. The Secretary of State should, as far as possible, hold in relation to the Government of India a position similar to that which the Secretary of State for the Colonies holds in relation to the Colonies. The Secretary of State should be assisted by two permanent Under-Secretaries, one of whom should be an Indian. The salaries of the Secretary and Under-Secretaries should be placed on the British estimates.

7. In any scheme of Imperial Federation, India should be given through her chosen representatives a place similar to that of the self-governing dominions.

8. The Provincial Governments should be made autonomous, as stated in the Government of India's despatch dated 25th August 1911.

9. The United Provinces, as well as the other major provinces, should have a Governor brought from the United Kingdom and should have an Executive Council.

10. A full measure of local self-government should be immediately granted.

11. The right to carry arms should be granted to Indians on the same conditions as to Europeans.

12. Indians should be allowed to enlist as volunteers and units of a territorial army established in India.

13. Commissions in the army should be given to Indian youths under conditions similar to those applicable to Europeans.

MANINDRA CHANDRA NANDY OF

KASIMBAZAR.

D. E. WACHA.

BHUPENDRANATH BASU.

BISHAN DUTT SHUKUL.

MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA.

K. V. RANGASWAMIENGAR.

MAZHARUL HAQUE.

V. S. SRINIVASAN.

TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU.

IBRAHIM RAHIMTOOLA.

B. NARASIMHESWARA SARMA.

MIR ASAD ALI.

KAMINI KUMAR CHANDA.

KRISHNA SAHAY.

R. N. BHANJA DEO OF KANIKA.

M. B. DADABHOY.

SITA NATH ROY.

MOHAMED ALI MOHAMED.

M. A. JINNAH.

## APPENDIX F.

### RESOLUTION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS ON SELF-GOVERNMENT.\*

(a) That having regard to the fact that the great communities of India are the inheritors of ancient civilizations and have shown great capacity for government and administration, and to the progress in education and public spirit made by them during a century of British Rule, and further having regard to the fact that the present system of Government does not satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the people and has become unsuited to existing conditions and requirements, the Congress is of opinion that the time has come when His Majesty the King-Emperor should be pleased to issue a Proclamation announcing that it is the aim and intention of British policy to confer self-government on India at an early date.

(b) That the Congress demands that a definite step should be taken towards self-government by granting the reforms contained in the scheme prepared by the All-India Congress Committee in concert with the Reform Committee appointed by the All-India Muslim League (detailed below).

(c) That in the re-construction of the Empire, India shall be lifted from the position of a Dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire with the self-governing Dominions.

#### THE REFORM SCHEME.

##### *I.—Provincial Legislative Councils.*

1. Provincial Legislative Councils shall consist of four-fifths elected and of one-fifth nominated members.

2. Their strength shall be not less than 125 members in the major provinces, and from fifty to seventy-five in the minor provinces.

3. The members of the Council should be elected directly by the people on as broad a franchise as possible.

\* This Resolution was unanimously adopted at the session of the Congress which met at Lucknow in December, 1916. A Resolution on exactly similar lines was also adopted at the annual meeting of the All-India Moslem League held in the same city about the same time.—P. C. R.

4. Adequate provision should be made for the representation of important minorities by election and the Mahomedans should be elected through special electorates on the Provincial Legislative Councils in the following proportions :—

Punjab—One half of the elected Indian Members.		
United Provinces—30 per cent.	„	„
Bengal—40 per cent.	„	„
Behar—25 per cent.	„	„
Central Provinces—15 per cent.	„	„
Madras—15 per cent.	„	„
Bombay—one-third	„	„

Provided that no Mahomedan shall participate in any of the other elections to the Imperial or Provincial Legislative Councils, save and except those by electorates representing special interests.

Provided further that no bill, nor any clause thereof, nor a resolution introduced by a non-official member affecting one or the other community, which question is to be determined by the members of that community in the Legislative Council concerned, shall be proceeded with, if three-fourths of the members of that community in the particular Council, Imperial or Provincial, oppose the bill or any clause thereof or the resolution.

5. The head of the Provincial Government should not be the President of the Legislative Council, but he should have the right of electing its President.

6. The right of asking supplementary questions should not be restricted to the member putting the original question, but should be allowed to be exercised by any other member.

7. (a) Except customs, post, telegraph, mint, salt, opium, railways, army and navy, and tributes from Indian States, all other sources of revenue should be Provincial.

(b) There should be no divided heads of revenue. The Government of India should be provided with fixed contributions from the Provincial Governments, such fixed contributions being liable to revision when extraordinary and unforeseen contingencies render such revision necessary.

(c) The Provincial Council should have full authority to deal with all matters affecting the internal administration of the province, including the power to raise loans, to impose and alter taxation, and to vote on the Budget. All items of expenditure, and all proposals concerning ways and means for raising the necessary revenue, should be embodied in Bills and submitted to the Provincial Council for adoption.

(d). Resolutions on all matters within the purview of the Provincial Government should be allowed for discussion in accordance with rules made in that behalf by the Council itself.

(e) A resolution passed by the Provincial Legislative Council shall be binding on the Executive Government, unless vetoed by the Governor-in-Council, provided however that if the resolution is again passed by the Council after an interval of not less than one year, it must be given effect to.

(f) A motion for adjournment may be brought forward for the discussion of a definite matter of urgent public importance, if supported by not less than one-eighth of the members present.

8. A special meeting of the Provincial Council may be summoned on a requisition by not less than one-eighth of the members.

9. A Bill, other than a Money Bill, may be introduced in Council in accordance with rules made in that behalf by the Council itself, and the consent of the Government shall not be required therefor.

10. All Bills passed by Provincial Legislatures shall have to receive the assent of the Government before they become law, but may be vetoed by the Governor-General.

11. The terms of office of the members shall be five years.

## II.—*Provincial Governments.*

1. The head of every Provincial Government shall be a Governor who shall not ordinarily belong to the Indian Civil Service or any of the permanent services.

2. There shall be in every Province an Executive Council which, with the Governor, shall constitute the Executive Government of the Province.

3. Members of the Indian Civil Service shall not ordinarily be appointed to the Executive Councils.

4. Not less than one half of the members of the Executive Council shall consist of Indians to be elected by the elected members of the Provincial Legislative Council.

5. The term of office of the members shall be five years.

## III.—*Imperial Legislative Council.*

1. The strength of the Imperial Legislative Council shall be 150.

2. Four-fifths of the members shall be elected.

3. The franchise for the Imperial Legislative Council should be widened as far as possible on the lines of the electorates for Mahomedans for the Provincial Legislative Councils, and the elected members of the Provincial Legislative Councils should also form an electorate for the return of members to the Imperial Legislative Council.

4. One-third of the Indian elected members should be Mahomedans, elected by separate Mahomedan electorates in the several Provinces, in the proportion, as nearly as may be, in which they are represented on the Provincial Legislative Councils, by separate Mahomedan electorates.

(*Vide* provisos to section I, clause 4.)

5. The President of the Council shall be elected by the Council itself.

6. The right of asking supplementary questions should not be restricted to the member putting the original question, but should be allowed to be exercised by any other member.

7. A special meeting of the Council may be summoned on a requisition by not less than one-eighth of the members.

8. A Bill, other than a Money Bill, may be introduced in Council in accordance with rules made in that behalf by the Council itself, and the consent of the Executive Government should not be required therefor.

9. All Bills passed by the Council shall have to receive the assent of the Governor-General before they become law.

10. All financial proposals relating to sources of income and items of expenditure shall be embodied in Bills. Every such Bill and the Budget as a whole shall be submitted for the vote of the Imperial Legislative Council.

11. The terms of office of members shall be five years.

12. The matters mentioned hereinbelow shall be exclusively under the control of the Imperial Legislative Council:

- (a) Matters in regard to which uniform legislation for the whole of India is desirable.
- (b) Provincial legislation in so far as it may affect inter-provincial fiscal relations.
- (c) Questions affecting purely Imperial Revenue, excepting tributes from Indian States.
- (d) Questions affecting purely Imperial expenditure, except that no resolution of the Imperial Legislative Council shall be binding on the Governor-General in Council in



respect of military charges for the defence of the country.

- (e) The right of revising Indian tariffs and customs-duties, of imposing, altering, or removing any taxes or cess, modifying the existing system of currency and banking, and granting any aids or bounties to any or all deserving or nascent industries of the country.
- (f) Resolutions on all matters relating to the administration of the country as a whole.

13. A Resolution passed by the Legislative Council should be binding on the Executive Government, unless vetoed by the Governor-General in Council, provided however that if the resolution is again passed by the Council after an interval of not less than one year, it must be given effect to.

14. A motion for adjournment may be brought forward for the discussion of a definite matter of urgent public importance, if supported by not less than one-eighth of the members present.

15. When the Crown chooses to exercise its power of veto in regard to a Bill passed by a Provincial Legislative Council, or by the Imperial Legislative Council, it should be exercised within twelve months from the date on which it is passed, and the Bill shall cease to have effect as from the date on which the fact of such veto is made known to the Legislative Council concerned.

16. The Imperial Legislative Council shall have no power to interfere with the Government of India's direction of the military affairs and the foreign and political relations of India, including the declaration of war, the making of peace, and the entering into treaties.

#### *IV.—The Government of India.*

1. The Governor-General of India will be the head of the Government of India.

2. He will have an Executive Council, half of whom shall be Indians.

3. The Indian members shall be elected by the elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council.

4. Members of the Indian Civil Service shall not ordinarily be appointed to the Executive Council of the Governor-General.

5. The power of making all appointments in the Imperial Civil Services shall vest in the Government of India, as constituted under this scheme, due regard being paid to existing

interests, subject to any laws that may be made by the Imperial Legislative Council.

6. The Government of India shall not ordinarily interfere in the local affairs of a province, and powers not specifically given to a Provincial Government shall be deemed to be vested in the former. The authority of the Government of India will ordinarily be limited to general supervision and superintendence over the Provincial Governments.

7. In legislative and administrative matters the Government of India, as constituted under this scheme, shall, as far as possible, be independent of the Secretary of State.

8. A system of independent audit of the accounts of the Government of India should be instituted.

#### *V.—The Secretary of State in Council.*

1. The Council of the Secretary of State for India should be abolished.

2. The salary of the Secretary of State should be placed on the British Estimates.

3. The Secretary of State should, as far as possible, occupy the same position in relation to the Government of India, as the Secretary of State for the Colonies does in relation to the Governments of self-governing Dominions.

4. The Secretary of State for India should be assisted by two Permanent Under-Secretaries, one of whom should always be an Indian.

#### *VI.—India and the Empire:*

1. In any Council or other body which may be constituted or convened for the settlement or control of Imperial affairs, India shall be adequately represented in like manner with the Dominions and with equal rights.

2. Indians should be placed on a footing of equality in respect of status and rights of citizenship with other subjects of His Majesty the King throughout the Empire.

#### *VII.—Military and Other Matters.*

1. *Commissions in the Army.*—The military and naval services of His Majesty, both in their commissioned and non-commissioned ranks, should be thrown open to Indians, and adequate

provision, should be made for their selection, training, and instruction in India.

2. *Volunteering*.—Indians should be allowed to enlist as volunteers.

3. *Separation of judicial and executive functions*.—Executive Officers in India shall have no judicial powers entrusted to them, and the judiciary in every province shall be placed under the highest Court of that province.

## APPENDIX G.

### PROCLAMATION OF KING GEORGE V.

DECEMBER, 1919.

GEORGE V, by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India. To my Viceroy and Governor-General, to the Princes of Indian States, and to all my subjects in India, of whatsoever race or creed, greeting.

1. Another epoch has been reached to-day in the annals of India. I have given my Royal Assent to an Act which will take its place among the great historic measures passed by the Parliament of this Realm for the better government of India and for the greater contentment of her people. The Acts of 1773 and 1784 were designed to establish a regular system of administration and justice under the Honourable East India Company. The Act of 1833 opened the door for Indians to public office and employment. The Act of 1858 transferred the administration from the Company to the Crown and laid the foundations of public life which exist in India to-day. The Act of 1861 sowed the seed of representative institutions, and the seed was quickened into life by the Act of 1909. The Act which now has become law entrusts the elected representatives of the people with a definite share in the Government and points the way to full responsible Government hereafter. If, as I confidently hope, the policy which this Act inaugurates should achieve its purpose, the results will be momentous in the story of human progress; and it is timely and fitting that I should invite you to-day to consider the past and to join me in my hopes of the future.

2. Ever since the welfare of India was confided to us, it has been held as a sacred trust by Our Royal House and Line. In 1858 Queen Victoria of revered memory solemnly declared herself bound to her Indian subjects by the same obligations of duty as to all her other subjects; and she assured to them religious freedom and the equal and impartial protection of the law. In his message to the Indian people in 1903, my dear

father, King Edward VII, announced his determination to maintain unimpaired the same principles of humane and equitable administration. Again in his Proclamation of 1908 he renewed the assurances which had been given five years before and surveyed the progress which they had inspired. On my accession to the throne in 1910 I sent a message to the Princes and peoples of India acknowledging their loyalty and homage and promising that the prosperity and happiness of India should always be to me of the highest interest and concern. In the following year I visited India with the Queen-Empress and testified my sympathy for her people and my desire for their well-being.

3. While these are the sentiments of affection and devotion by which I and my predecessors have been animated, the Parliament and the people of this Realm and my officers in India have been equally zealous for the moral and material advancement of India. We have endeavoured to give to her people the many blessings which Providence has bestowed upon ourselves. But there is one gift which yet remains, and without which the progress of a country cannot be consummated—the right of her people to direct her affairs and safeguard her interests. The defence of India against foreign aggression is a duty of common Imperial interest and pride. The control of her domestic concerns is a burden which India may legitimately aspire to take upon her own shoulders. The burden is too heavy to be borne in full until time and experience have brought the necessary strength ; but opportunity will now be given for experience to grow and for responsibility to increase with the capacity for its fulfilment.

4. I have watched with understanding and sympathy the growing desire of my Indian people for representative institutions. Starting from small beginnings this ambition has steadily strengthened its hold upon the intelligence of the country. It has pursued its course along constitutional channels with sincerity and courage. It has survived the discredit which at times and in places lawless men sought to cast upon it by acts of violence committed under the guise of patriotism. It has been stirred to more vigorous life by the ideals for which the British Commonwealth fought in the Great War, and it claims support in the part which India has taken in our common struggles, anxiety and victories. In truth the desire after political responsibility has its source at the roots of the British connection with India. It has sprung inevitably from the deeper and wider studies of human thought and history which that connection has opened to the Indian people. Without it the work of the British in India would have been incomplete. It was therefore with a wise judgment that the beginnings of representative institutions

were laid many years ago. Their scope has been extended stage by stage until there now lies before us a definite step on the road to responsible government.

5. With the same sympathy and with redoubled interest I shall watch the progress along this road. The path will not be easy and in the march towards the goal there will be need of perseverance and of mutual forbearance between all sections and races of my people in India. I am confident that those high qualities will be forthcoming. I rely on the new popular assemblies to interpret wisely the wishes of those whom they represent and not to forget the interests of the masses who cannot yet be admitted to franchise. I rely on the leaders of people, the ministers of the future, to face responsibility and endure misrepresentation, to sacrifice much for the common interest of the states, remembering that true patriotism transcends party and communal boundaries and, while retaining the confidence of the legislatures, to co-operate with my officers for the common good in sinking unessential differences and in maintaining the essential standards of a just and generous government. Equally do I rely on my officers to respect their new colleagues and to work with them in harmony and kindliness; to assist the people and their representatives in an orderly advance towards free institutions; and to find in these new tasks a fresh opportunity to fulfil, as in the past, their highest purpose of faithful service to my people.

6. It is my earnest desire at this time that so far as possible any trace of bitterness between my people and those who are responsible for my government should be obliterated. Let those who in their eagerness for political progress have broken the law in the past respect it in the future. Let it become possible for those who are charged with the maintenance of peaceful and orderly government to forget the extravagances which they have had to curb. A new era is opening. Let it begin with common determination among my people and my officers to work together for a common purpose. I therefore direct my Viceroy to exercise in my name and on my behalf my Royal clemency to political offenders in the fullest measure which in his judgment is compatible with the public safety. I desire him to extend it on this condition to persons who for offences against the State or under any special or emergency legislation are suffering imprisonment or restrictions upon their liberty. I trust that this leniency will be justified by the future conduct of those whom it benefits, and that all my subjects will so demean themselves as to render it unnecessary to enforce the laws for such offences hereafter.

7. Simultaneously with the new constitutions in British India, I have gladly assented to the establishment of a Chamber of Princes. I trust that its counsel may be fruitful of lasting good to the Princes and the States themselves, may advance the interests which are common to their territories and to British India, and may be to the advantage of the Empire as a whole. I take the occasion again to assure the Princes of India of my determination ever to maintain unimpaired their privileges, rights and dignities.

8. It is my intention to send my dear son, the Prince of Wales, to India next winter to inaugurate on my behalf the new Chamber of Princes and the new constitutions in British India. May he find mutual good-will and confidence prevailing among those on whom will rest the future service of the country, so that success may crown their labours, and progressive enlightenment attend their administration. And, with all my people, I pray to Almighty God that by His Wisdom and under His guidance India may be led to greater prosperity and contentment, and may grow to the fullness of political freedom.

## APPENDIX H.

	Year.	Place.	President.	No. of delegates.
1	1885	Bombay	W. C. Bonnerjee	72
2	1886	Calcutta	Dabadhai Naoroji	436
3	1887	Madras	Buddriddin Tyabji	607
4	1888	Allahabad	George Yule	1,248
5	1889	Bombay	Sir William Wedderburn	1,889
6	1890	Calcutta	Pherozechah Mehta	677
7	1891	Nagpur	Annanda Charlu	817
8	1892	Allahabad	W. C. Bonnerjee	625
9	1893	Lahore	Dadabhai Naoroji	867
10	1894	Madras	Alfred Webb	1,163
11	1895	Poona	Surendra Nath Banerjea	1,584
12	1896	Calcutta	Rahimtulla Muhammad Sayani	784
13	1897	Amraoti	Sankaran Nair	693
14	1898	Madras	Ananda Mohan Bose	614
15	1899	Lucknow	Romes Chandra Dutta	739
16	1900	Lahore	Narayen Chandavarkar	567
17	1901	Calcutta	Dinshaw Wacha	896
18	1902	Ahmedabad	Surendra Nath Banerjea	417
19	1903	Madras	Lalmohon Ghose	538
20	1904	Bombay	Sir Henry Cotton	1,010
21	1905	Benares	Gopal Krishna Gokhale	758
22	1906	Calcutta	Dadabhoy Naoroji	1,663
23	1907	Surat	Rash Behari Ghose	1,300
	1908	Madras	Rash Behari Ghose	626
24	1909	Lahore	Madan Mohan Malaviya	243
25	1910	Allahabad	Sir William Wedderburn	636
26	1911	Calcutta	Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar	446
27	1912	Bankipore	R. M. Madholkar	207
28	1913	Karachi	Nawab Syed Mahmud	550
29	1914	Madras	Bhupendra Nath Basu	866
30	1915	Bombay	Sir S. P. Sinha	—



	Year.	Place.	President.	No. of delegates.
31	1916	Lucknow	Ambica Charan Majumdar	—
32	1917	Calcutta	Annie Besant	4,967
33	1918 (Spl.)	Bombay	Syed Hassan Imam	4,967
33	1918	Delhi	Madan Mohan Malaviya	4,869
34	1919	Amritsar	Moti Lal Nehru	—
	1920 (Spl.)	Calcutta	Lala Lajpat Rai	—
35	1920	Nagpur	Vijayaraghava Chariar	—
36	1921	Ahmedabad	Hakim Ajmal Khan	4,726
37	1922	Gaya	Chitta Ranjan Das	—
	1923 (Spl.)	Delhi	Abul Kalam Azad	—
38	1923	Cocanada	Muhammad Ali	—
39	1924	Belgaum	Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi	—
40	1925	Cawnpore	Mrs. Sarojoni Naidu	3,762
41	1926	Gauhati	Srinivasa Ayengar	About 2,000

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